A Rodale Craft Book

The Complete Book of Nature Craft Techniques

From Baskets and Bows
to Vinegars and Wreaths,
Everything You Need to Know
to Craft with Natural Materials

Deborah Morgenthal
and Chris Rich

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RODALE BOOKS

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To the best of our knowledge, the plants and plant materials recommended in this book are common natural materials that can be grown and collected without harm to the environment.

On the cover (clockwise from bottom left): Engraved Autumnal Gourds (page 143), Root & Flower Wreath (page 234), Bark Baskets (page 11), Iris & Willow Potato Basket (page 35), Twig Basket (page 223)

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INTRODUCTION

In nature crafts, as in many aspects of life, there are two types of people. The first type sees a beautiful wreath, basket, or carved gourd in a craft store and exclaims, "I could make this!" The second type sees the same item and regretfully sighs, "I could never make this." Do you recognize which type you are?

The mission of this book is twofold: To inspire the crafters in the first group by providing them with a wealth of information and a lot of enticing projects so that they can live up to their own expectations, and to convince the folks in the second group that with the right tools, techniques, and materials, they most certainly can learn to make a whole variety of nature crafts.

No matter which type you are, we believe that this book, written in an A to Z format, will answer all your questions about nature-craft techniques. It's all here: drying flowers, making wreath bases, weaving wheat, tying bows, collecting natural materials—one glance at the "Contents" on page 5 will show you how comprehensive the book is. Each major category of natural material is explored so that you'll have an even greater appreciation of Mother Nature's amazing gifts. You'll learn how to handle a hot-glue gun and when and why to use floral pins, picks, and tape. Plus you can practice these techniques by making more than 80 eye-catching projects, including bark baskets, cornhusk dolls, dried flower wreaths, handmade paper, potpourris, terrariums, vinegars, and much, much more.

The Complete Book of Nature Craft Techniques, brimming with hints, tips, and projects, has something for everyone interested in this popular activity, from the beginner to the expert. If you're skilled at wreathmaking, here's your opportunity to learn how to make paper or paint a gourd. If you've never so much as pressed a flower, here's your chance to learn how.

Skim through the book for a minute: See that gorgeous swag on page 204? You can make it. Oh, and that stunning pine-needle basket on page 184—you can make that, too. Why are you waiting? Let's get started.

How to Use This Book

The book is organized alphabetically into 37 sections that represent the major nature-craft techniques, tools, and supplies, as well as the most commonly used materials. Step-by-step instructions and color photographs demonstrate how to clean and prepare a cured gourd, how to make a straw base, two types of bows, a cornhusk doll, a flower arrangement, handmade papers, a terrarium, tussie mussies, a twig basket, and an evergreen wreath. There are detailed instructions, often accompanied by illustrations, for making dozens and dozens of projects that use the various techniques and materials discussed.

There are a few ways that you can use this book. You can start with "Apples" and work your way through the alphabet to "Zinnias"—a great option if you have unlimited time! It's more likely that you'll begin with a technique that interests you. For instance, let's say you want to learn how to make a wreath. You might begin by turning to "Wreaths" and reading the entire chapter. In the process, you'll be referred to "Bases" for information on how to make your own base. (There are a number of cross-references like this throughout the book.) You'll also be referred to the different types of materials often used in wreaths, such as berries, pods, and herbs. You may want to look at those chapters to see what your options are. Returning to the wreath chapter, you may decide to take advantage of the how-to project that will take you through all the steps for making an evergreen wreath.

Another approach would be to use the index and start by looking up the material you want to use in your wreath—dried flowers, for example. You would turn to the chapter on "Drying," where a great deal of information is given on different kinds of dried flowers, along with several dried flower wreath projects. Then you could jump right in by making the wreath that most appeals to you. Or, you could turn to the index where you'll find a listing for "Wreaths" with all the wreath projects in the book identified in one place.

Each project in the book features a comprehensive list of materials, tools, and supplies, with the natural materials mentioned first and in the order in which you will use them; the other materials, tools, and supplies are then listed, again in order of use. Exact amounts and sizes of each type of material are given. Feel free to substitute other materials that you prefer or that are more available to you. Alter sizes and quantities, too. And by all means—if you would rather wire the flower on, instead of hot-gluing it—go right ahead. We do not intend for the lists, materials, and instructions to stifle you, but rather, to make certain that if you choose to follow them as they are written, you will wind up with a project that closely resembles the one in the photograph.

If you are planning to collect your own wild materials, please be sure you know which plant species are endangered and avoid harvesting them. Also, try not to collect too many materials of any kind from one locale. And please be considerate and always ask permission before harvesting on private property.

There are many ways to describe one or more flowers or plants. To be consistent and clear, we devised the following working definitions:

Bloom Single, simple flower without a stem, such as a marigold bloom.

Bunch A large amount of one material as sold by florists, craft-supply stores, and mail-order catalogues.

Bundle or cluster Three to seven stems of one or more flowers or herbs.

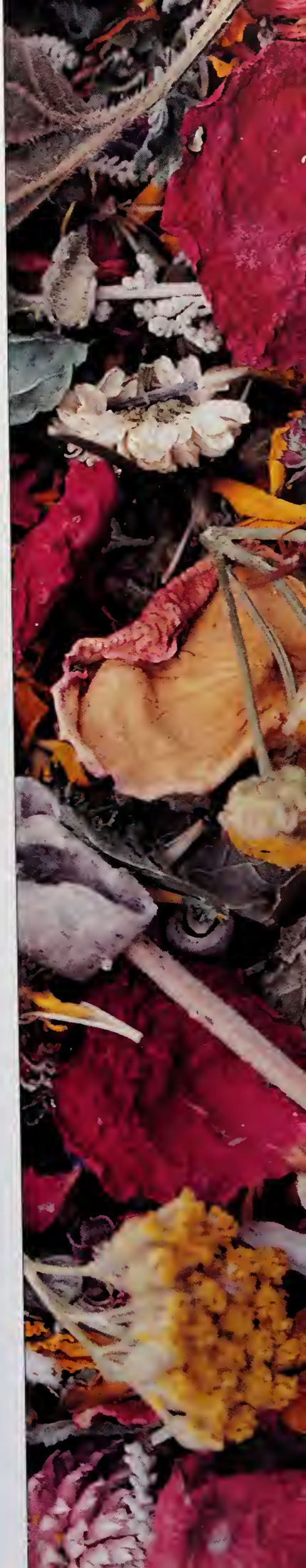
Flower head Complex blooms of a flower or herb, with the stem cut off, such as a yarrow flower head.

Sprig One of or a piece of the smaller branching stems taken from a larger stem, such as baby's-breath, juniper, sweet Annie, statice, and artemisia.

Stem Complete plant material with or without the flowering part, such as a stem of oregano or a stem of hydrangea.

There are many excellent books on the market that offer detailed instructions on a single nature craft, such as basketry or flower arranging. If a topic in this book whets your appetite and makes you eager to learn more, we encourage you to do so.

In whatever way you choose to use this book, it is our sincere hope that it will open the door to the rewarding world of making beautiful crafts, thanks to nature's bounty and your own capable hands. Happy crafting!



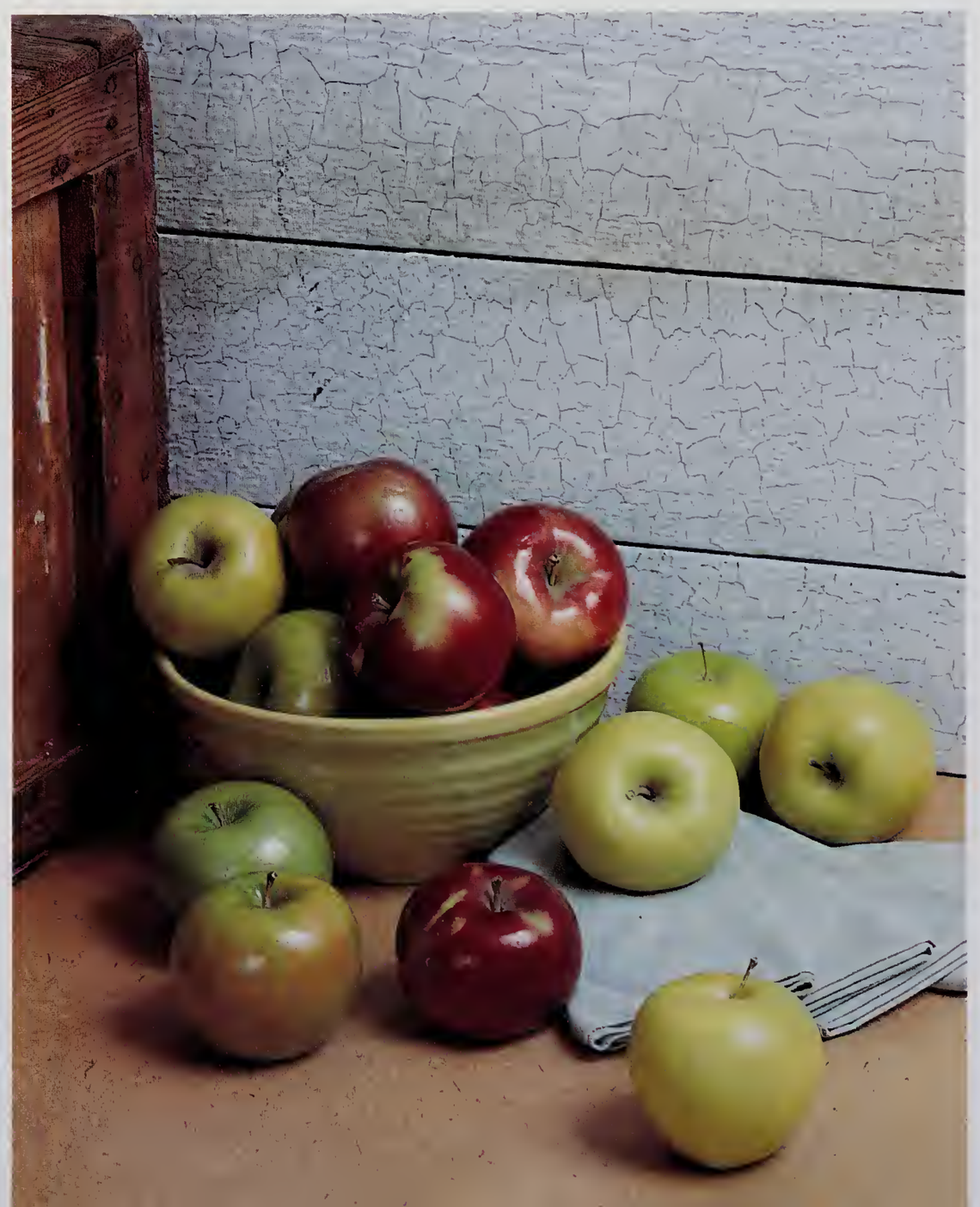
A APPLES

Apples are plentiful, inexpensive, delightfully fragrant, and available throughout the year. What's more, they're easy to incorporate into craft designs.

If you've never used apples as craft material, you're in for a surprise. Whole, fresh, red apples add a special touch to seasonal wreaths. To help apples retain their shiny appearance and solid shape, dip them into acrylic floor wax and let the wax dry thoroughly before using them in your project.

Dried, chopped apples add a delicious tang to teas, as well as fragrance and texture to potpourri. When designing fragrant projects, keep in mind that apples work well with the spices that accompany them in cooking: cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg.

Dried apple slices are perfect for nature crafts, as you'll discover when you make this decorative garland.



Kitchen Garland

Designed to grace a wall or cabinet, this colorful strand of culinary materials will lift your spirits every time you walk into the kitchen.

What You Need

- 4 garlic bulbs
- 5 dried pomegranates
- 320 whole bay leaves
- 30 dried apple slices
- Electric drill with 1/32-inch drill bit
- 44 inches of plastic-coated floral wire
- Wire cutters
- Masking tape
- Several lengths of raffia

What You Do

1 If you want to dry your own pomegranates, follow the instructions on page 84 in the "Drying" section. Then, using the drill and bit, bore holes through the centers of the garlic bulbs and the dried pomegranates.

2 Using the wire cutters, cut one end of the wire at an angle to create a sharp point. Mark the center of the wire with a small piece of masking tape. Thread one pomegranate onto the sharpened wire, centering it over the masking tape. Continue threading the materials onto the sharpened wire in the following order: 20 bay leaves, 5 apple slices, 20 bay leaves, 1 garlic bulb, 20 bay leaves, 5 apple slices, 20 bay leaves, 1 pomegranate, 20 bay leaves, 5 apple slices, 20 bay leaves, 1 garlic bulb, 20 bay leaves, 1 pomegranate, and 20 bay leaves.

When all the materials are strung, blunt-cut the wire.

3 Cut the other end of the wire at an angle to create a sharp point. Thread the rest of the materials onto the sharpened wire in the same order listed in Step 2, starting with the 20 bay leaves. When all the materials are strung, blunt-cut the wire.

4 Twist each end of the wire to form a secure loop and trim the ends as necessary. Make a raffia bow and tie it just below each wire loop.

5 Using one loop or both, suspend the garland on a wall, over a cabinet door, or around a window or doorway.

For another project with apples, *see page 188.*

B BARK

Today, we barely notice bark until it's brought to our attention, but our ancestors knew a good thing when they saw it. For centuries, this flexible and resilient material has been gathered and shaped to make functional and decorative items.

Harvesting tree bark isn't difficult, but you need to know what you're doing before you start. Bark textures vary from species to species. To make the basket presented in this chapter, select trees with bark that is relatively smooth and flexible. Birches, yellow poplars, young maples, aspens, and cottonwoods are all suitable.

Although it's possible to strip bark from old logs, bark removed from green logs is much more supple, especially if you use it within a couple days of harvesting it. Fell your tree during the spring or summer; after the first frost, the bark won't peel properly from green logs.

To preserve the global tree population, exercise restraint when selecting trees. Unless you're working in your own well-managed woodlot, choose only saplings that need to come down. Remove all the usable bark and make more than one project. For example, you can use the stripped logs for fence posts or firewood. Take special care when working with the sharp tools used to harvest tree bark.

To make the attractive wallhanging in this chapter, you'll need a three-dimensional piece of "found" bark that has fallen from a tree. Set aside a sunny day for a bark-seeking stroll along your favorite woodland path. Your "found" bark won't match the birch bark in this project exactly, so adapt the project instructions as needed.

Harvesting Bark for Baskets

Start with a young, second-growth tree, no larger than 10 inches in diameter. Fell the tree using a handsaw or axe. Using the same tool, remove all the branches as close to the trunk as possible. Cut the trunk into 6-foot-long sections.

Using a linoleum (or hawk-billed) knife, split the outer bark down the entire length of the log. Insert a chisel or spud into the split and gradually pry the bark from the log, alternating sides as you work. (A spud—a green stick, ½ inch in diameter, which is cut at one end to resemble a chisel blade—is less likely to scar the inner surface of the bark.) Continue until the bark pops off the log.

These rustic baskets make eye-catching containers for anything from dried flowers from your garden to after-school snacks for your children.

Bark Baskets

What You Need (for 1 basket)

- Harvested bark
- Linoleum knife or hawk-billed knife
- Tape measure
- Pencil
- Straightedge
- Large rubber band
- Electric drill and 1/16-inch drill bit, or a hammer and awl
- 48 inches of jute twine
- Curved upholstery needle with large eye
- Scissors
- Several sheets of newspaper (optional)

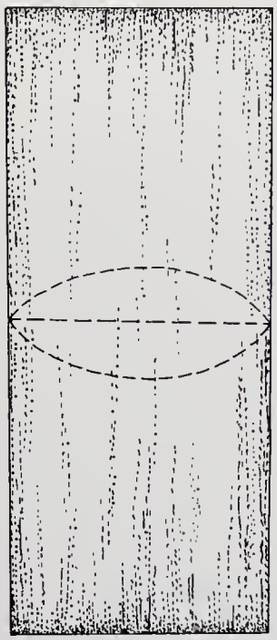


Figure 1

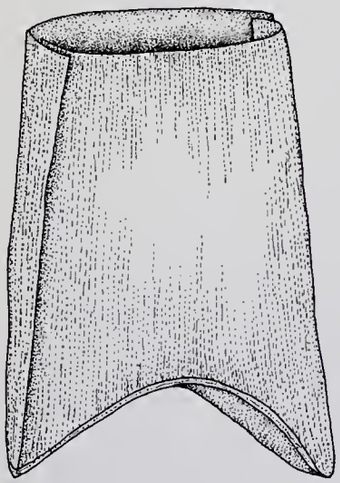


Figure 2

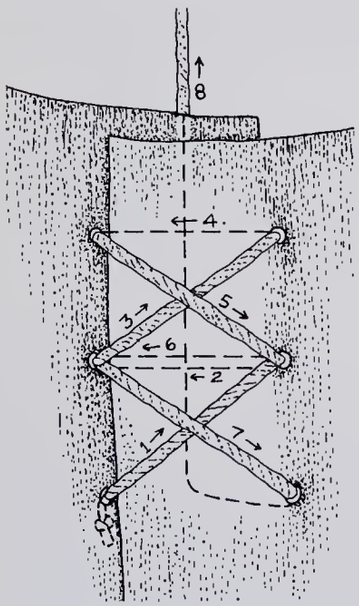


Figure 3

What You Do

1 While the harvested bark is still wet and pliable, use the knife to cut the bark into 12 × 24-inch rectangles.

2 Position one bark rectangle on a flat work surface, with its outer surface facing up. Use the tape measure and the pencil to measure and mark the center point along each long edge. Then, using the straightedge and the pencil, draw a straight line to join the two points. On each side of the center line, draw an arc (see Figure 1). The two arcs should form a carefully proportioned "cat's eye."

3 Use the knife to score both arcs lightly, piercing only the outermost bark layer. Make sure that the cuts meet precisely at each edge of the bark.

4 Lift up the bark rectangle and carefully fold it along the scored lines to form a basket with an eye-shaped bottom. The long edges of the bark should overlap on both sides of the basket (see Figure 2).

5 Place a large rubber band around the basket to secure it.

6 To fasten the sides of the basket, you'll lace them up as if you were lacing a shoe, but you'll use only one piece of jute twine. (Lacing patterns can vary, but beginners should start with the one described here.) Using the pattern shown in Figure 3, mark six holes on each side of the basket, starting about ½ inch from the top.

7 Bore the marked holes with the drill bit or the awl, making the holes large enough to accommodate the twine.

8 Tie a large knot at one end of the twine and thread the other end through the upholstery needle.

9 Following the numbered sequence shown in Figure 3, start lacing the twine from the bottom inside surface of the basket, continuing up the outer surface and back down again. The twine will end up coming out on the inside at the bottom. Thread this end of the twine up underneath the center of the lacing on the inside of the basket. When you reach the top set of holes, tie another tight knot on the inside surface to prevent the sides of the basket from pulling apart. Leaving about 12 to 18 inches of twine to serve as a handle, bring the twine down and start lacing again from an inside bottom hole on the opposite side of the basket. Repeat the lacing process on this side and tie a secure knot when you're finished. With the scissors, trim the ends of the twine as necessary.

10 Remove the rubber band from the basket and hang the basket by its twine handle to dry. This will take about three weeks. Don't worry if you notice an unattractive odor during this time; bark smells less than appealing as it dries, but the odor will disappear. In extremely dry areas, the edges may curl as the basket cures. To prevent this from happening, stuff the basket tightly with crumpled newspaper, if desired.

Woodland Bark Curl

You can find nature's bounties everywhere. This piece of "found" bark has been transformed into a decorative wallhanging.

What You Need

1 piece of three-dimensional "found" bark

16 dried magnolia leaves

5 assorted feathers, 5 inches long

3 or 4 stems of dried statice, 12 to 15 inches long

12 stems of dried astilbe, 12 inches long

4 love-in-a-mist seed heads

1 piece of heavy-duty cardboard, at least 6 inches square

Scissors or sharp knife

Wire cutters

Spool of medium-gauge floral wire

1 piece of felt, 10 inches square

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Wood glue

Heavy object, like a rock

Sahara foam

6 craft picks

Red spray paint

1 artificial bird

Spray shellac

What You Do

1 To make a wall-mounting plate for this project, use the scissors or the knife to cut a piece of cardboard just large enough to help stabilize the curl against the wall, but not so large that the plate will show once it has been glued to the back of the project.

2 To make a hanger for the cardboard plate, use the point of the scissors or the knife to poke two small holes through the center of the cardboard, spacing them about 3 inches apart. Using the wire cutters, cut a 7-inch-long piece of the floral wire. Insert one end of the wire into one hole and form that end into a coil to prevent it from slipping back through the hole. Repeat with the other end of the wire and the other hole, leaving enough wire between the holes to serve as a hanger.

3 Cut a slit in the felt piece, locating it in approximately the same position on the felt as the wire hanger occupies on the mounting plate. Place the felt over the plate, slipping the wire through the slit. Bring the edges of the felt around to the back of the plate, hot-gluing the felt to the cardboard wherever necessary. Trim away any excess felt.

4 Brush away any debris from the inner portions of the bark curl. Center the bark curl on the back of the plate. Remove the curl, spread a small pool of wood glue on the plate, and replace the curl. Press the bark against the plate by inserting a heavy object, such as a rock, into the curl. Set the project aside to dry for 24 hours.

5 Using the photo on page 13 as a guide, hot-glue ten of the magnolia leaves between the mounting plate and the curl, five above and five below the center point. Note that these leaves should disguise any visible portions of the plate.

6 Fill both ends of the bark curl with Sahara foam, adding wedges of foam until the foam is secure.

7 If the remaining six magnolia leaves lack stems, hot-glue them to craft picks. At each end of the bark curl, insert three magnolia leaves and the feathers into the Sahara foam toward the back of the curl. Break small sections of the statice from the long stems and insert them to form a feathery cloud in front of the leaves and the feathers.

8 Break off and discard a few inches of each stem of astilbe, leaving 2 to 3 inches of stem on each piece. Spray paint the astilbe red and allow it to dry.

9 Insert the painted astilbe stems into the foam at each end of the bark curl so that only the blooms show, locating them toward the front of the project to create a layered effect. Then insert the love-in-a-mist seed heads toward the front at each end. Hot-glue the bird in place on the outside of the curl.

10 To preserve the project's colors, carefully spray it with shellac.

BASES

When you plan to make a wreath, swag, or garland, your first decision will be what type of base to use. A base provides the support for the natural materials and other items that are attached to it. When you make a wreath, for example, the kind of base you need will be determined by the kinds of materials you plan to use to create your wreath and the overall look you want to achieve. Larger materials demand a larger base in order to look well proportioned. Heavier items must be secured so they won't fall off and to prevent the wreath from sagging. The most commonly used bases are vine, straw, and wire, followed by moss-covered, twig, and polystyrene.

The role that the base will play and the types of decorative elements that will be attached will help you decide what kind of base you need. If you plan to attach dozens of small clusters of dried flowers using floral picks, a straw or polystyrene base will work well. But if you plan to cover the entire base by gluing on heavy shells, you might favor a straw base reinforced with wire. If you don't want to cover the entire base with materials, you'll want a base that looks attractive when unadorned, such as grapevine or moss-covered. "Wreath Base Options" on page 21 highlights the main advantages, drawbacks, and attachment methods for each type of base.

Craft-supply stores and many discount outlets carry reasonably priced wreath bases in many different sizes and made from a remarkable variety of natural materials, including eucalyptus stems, juniper branches, rye stems, and magnolia leaves. But it is easy and rewarding to make your own base. Simply follow the instructions in this chapter to make straw, vine, twig, and moss-covered bases.

Straw Bases

Straw bases are easy to make. Any type of hay, alfalfa, or dried grasses can be fashioned into a base of the size and shape you want. Straw bases are usually completely covered with materials to "hide" their appearance. But because it's easy to attach materials to these bases with floral picks, wire, or hot glue, these ugly ducklings are a favorite among wreath designers. Straw bases are especially reliable if you'll be attaching heavy items, such as whole, dried fruit.

To make a strong straw base, it's good to aim for a thickness of 2 to 3 inches, but a thinner or thicker base may be more appropriate for your wreath design. You may want to wear cloth gardening gloves to protect your hands from the straw's slivers and sharp ends.

Straw Base

WHAT YOU NEED

6 to 12 large handfuls of straw

1 wire coat hanger or 39½ inches of heavy-gauge wire

Wire cutters

Needle-nose pliers

Spool of fine-gauge floral wire

WHAT YOU DO

1 Unbend the coat hanger or the heavy-gauge wire and shape it into a circle that is about 12 inches in diameter. Use the needle-nose pliers to twist the two wire ends together.

2 Start with a large handful of straw, compress it tightly, and position it against the wire ring. (If you're right-handed, hold the straw and the wire circle in your left hand.)

3 With your other hand, wind the floral wire two or three times around the straw and the wire circle in 1½- to 2-inch intervals. Make sure the wire is tight enough to bundle the straw securely. Loop the starting end of the wire around a section of the wrapped wire to hold it in place.

4 Continue adding handfuls of straw of the same thickness and securing the straw with floral wire. Each new handful should slightly overlap the preceding one. Keep unwinding the wire from the spool; don't cut it until you have the entire base covered with straw.

5 Finish assembling the base by wrapping the floral wire three times around the straw in the same place and trimming it with the wire cutters. For a thicker wreath, wire on another layer of straw. The base can now be shaped into a more precise circle, if desired, or reshaped into an oval or a square.

Vine and Twig Bases

Vine and twig bases are popular because their natural beauty allows the designer to leave portions of the base exposed. In fact, the base becomes an important design element of the floral arrangement. Craft-supply stores carry a wide range of vine and twig bases, such as grapevine hearts, ovals, bows, and circles; huckleberry wreaths and arches; and trellis forms made from twigs. You can often find many of these bases at florist shops, and a smaller selection is usually available at discount outlets.

Why not try to collect your own vines and twigs and make your own base? It's easy and fun. Grapevine is the sturdiest; honeysuckle and wisteria are nearly as strong but have a more delicate appearance. Bittersweet, huckleberry, and catbrier can also be fashioned into distinctive-looking bases. Kudzu, the fast-growing Asian vine (and the bane of gardeners in the Southeast!), makes a very sturdy base, too (see "Wild Wreath" on page 235). Birch, dogwood, elm, fantail pussy willow, hemlock, silver maple, sycamore, and willow are sources of good-quality twigs. Pine isn't a good choice because it oozes sap for quite a while after it's been cut. For a discussion of how to collect and handle cut vines and twigs, see "Vines" on page 231 and "Twigs" on page 221.

To form bases for short swags, wire several vines or twigs together at the center, using medium- or heavy-gauge floral wire (see Figure 1). Vine and twig wreath bases are just as easy to make as you will see from the following two sets of instructions.

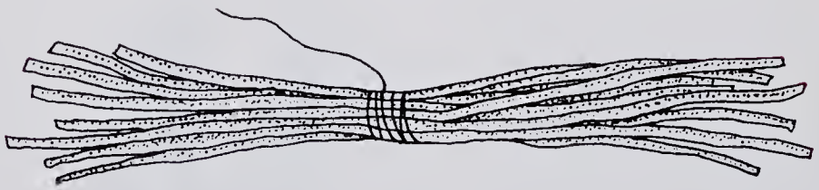


Figure 1

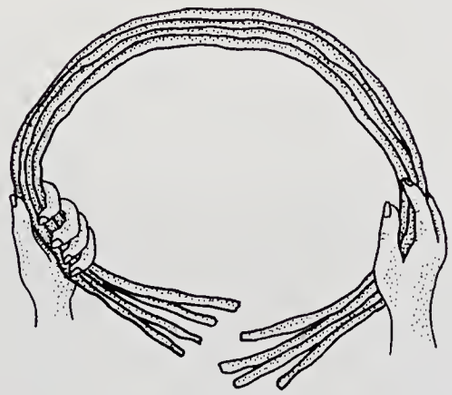


Figure 2

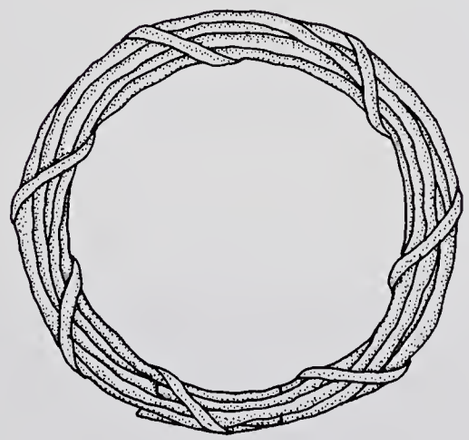


Figure 3

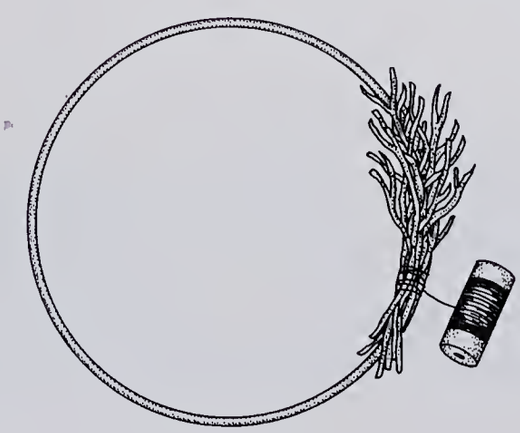


Figure 4

Making a Vine Wreath Base

If you are working with short lengths of vine, hold six to eight lengths (15 inches or less) together and bend them to form a circle a little larger than you want your finished wreath to be (see Figure 2). Leave a 2-inch overlap at the ends and secure the lengths of vine together by wrapping a single 6-inch-long vine horizontally over the overlapped ends.

If you're working with a very long vine (3 to 4 feet long), form a circle the size you want the wreath to be and continue winding the long vine around this circle until the base is as thick as you want it. Secure the rounds by wrapping the vine horizontally around the base (see Figure 3).

Much of the charm of a vine base is the material itself: The meandering tendrils add excitement and a sense of movement. Experiment with the base by wrapping the circle shape with more vines or winding all of them either in one direction or in alternating directions. If you want a different look, you can spray your finished base a color that matches your decor.

Making a Twig Base

Unbend a wire coat hanger and shape it into a circle, twisting the ends to secure them.

Assemble 16 bunches of twigs (4 to 5 inches long), each with five twigs. Fasten each bunch with a rubber band at one end.

Attach the bunches to the wire circle with floral wire, overlapping each bunch to hide the rubber band (see Figure 4). Do not cut the wire; keep wrapping until the entire circle is covered with the twig clusters.

When you are finished assembling the base, wrap the wire around the twig clusters and the wire circle at least three times and then cut the wire. You can try this technique with pussy willows, too. Cut the willow stems to 4-inch lengths and wire them individually to a wire base.

Moss-Covered Bases

Moss is a wonderful medium for a base, and you can use a variety of mosses. Depending on the kind you use, you can create a base that is rustic, delicate, unobtrusive, neutral, or dramatic. Another attraction of moss is that plant material can be easily picked or hot-glued onto the moss (see "Mosses, Lichens, & Fungi" on page 168). Moss-covered bases in a range of sizes are available commercially, but you can easily make them yourself in just the right size and shape for your project. For tips on gathering fresh moss, see "Harvesting Moss" on page 168.

To cover a polystyrene or a straw base with Spanish moss, simply arrange the moss around the top and sides of the base and then secure it in place with floral pins or with loose wraps of monofilament or medium-gauge floral wire (see Figure 5). If you are using sheet or mood moss, simply wrap it around the base and secure it with floral pins. It's best to try this when the moss is still damp so that it won't break when you curve it around the polystyrene or straw base.

To make a Spanish-moss base from scratch, you will need several large handfuls of moss, an unbent coat hanger or a 24- to 36-inch length of heavy-gauge wire, and a spool of monofilament or medium-gauge wire. First, shape the coat hanger or the heavy-gauge wire into a circle slightly smaller than the size you want the wreath base to be. Similar to the instructions for making a straw base (see page 16), hold a large handful of moss against the wire circle and secure the moss in place by wrapping the spool wire or monofilament around it several times in 1½- to 2-inch intervals (see Figure 6). Continue adding handfuls of moss until the entire wire circle is covered and you are satisfied with the shape and thickness of the base.

Moss also can be used to fill the multiple-wire ring bases available in craft stores. These ring bases have a small trench that encircles the base and can be filled with natural materials, such as sweet Annie, artemisia, and moss. Pack the base with the moss (see Figure 7 on page 20); you can use fresh moss and let it dry in place. Secure the moss by wrapping a length of monofilament or medium-gauge floral wire at 2-inch intervals around the wire base.

Another way to use moss on a base is as part of a three-dimensional construction. This approach gives you a surface area on another plane on which materials can be placed. Simply cut a square of dry floral foam to the desired size and attach it to a vine base with floral wire and/or hot glue (see Figure 8 on page 20). Cover the floral

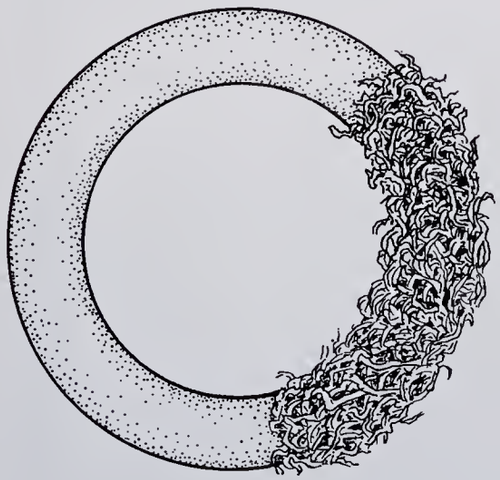


Figure 5

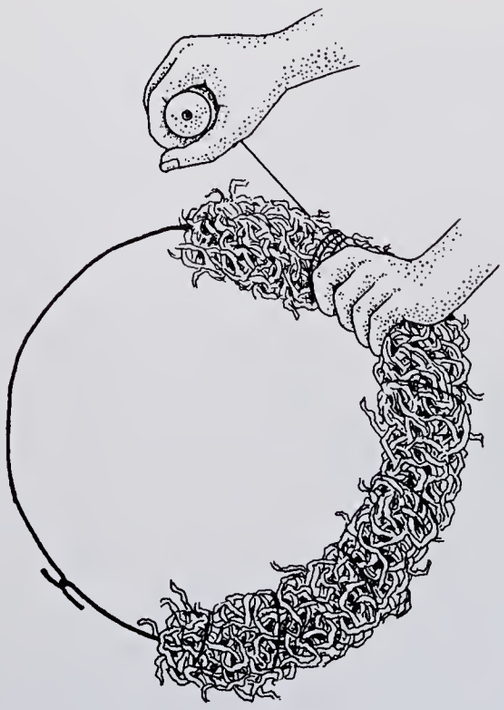


Figure 6

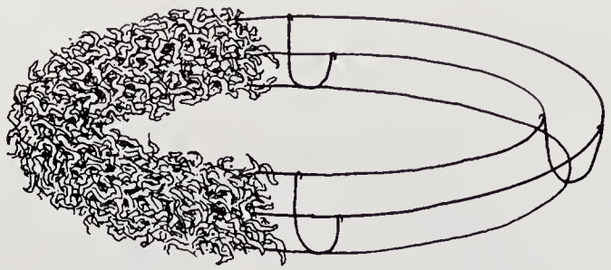


Figure 7

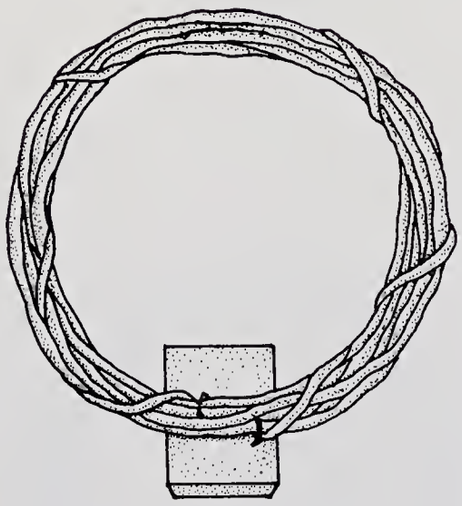


Figure 8

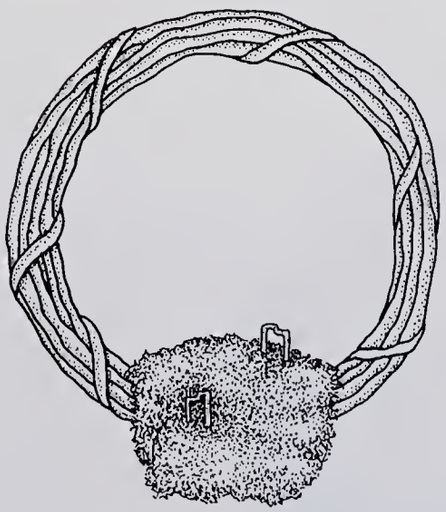


Figure 9

foam with a piece of sheet moss, using floral picks or pins to secure it (see Figure 9). Then use floral picks or hot glue to attach materials as you would with a polystyrene base (see "Wreaths" on page 236).

Wet Floral Foam Bases

The dense green foam from which these bases are made retains water so that any fresh-cut materials inserted into the base will be kept moist. (To prevent moisture from staining the surface on which the finished wreath is placed, most wet foam bases are backed with an impermeable plastic material. For extra protection, place a sheet of glass or acrylic plastic under the wreath.) These wreaths can be purchased through a florist, or you can make your own by purchasing floral foam in squares (available at craft-supply stores) and using a serrated knife to cut pieces to fit the trench in a multiple-wire base. Using thin floral tape, secure the foam to the base.

Polystyrene Bases

Man-made polystyrene bases are relatively inexpensive, lightweight, and sturdier than you might imagine. Unless they've been adorned, they're fairly unattractive, so it's important to completely cover these bases with your background material.

To make your own polystyrene base, purchase a few blocks of this material from a craft-supply store, arm yourself with a serrated knife, and cut the desired shape. Then completely cover the base with moss as described in "Moss-Covered Bases" on page 19.

Wire Bases

With nothing more than a pair of wire cutters and some heavy-gauge floral wire or an old coat hanger, you'll be able to make bases for swags, garlands, and wreaths. Just cut the wire 4 inches longer than you want the finished base to be. Overlap the ends by 2 inches and fasten your circle by wrapping the remaining length of wire around the overlapped ends.

WREATH BASE OPTIONS

Vine

Advantages

Complements many different wreath designs; so attractive that large portions can be left uncovered; can be purchased or easily made in a wide range of sizes, shapes, and materials; can be painted any color; sturdy enough to support heavy items; gives the wreath a natural look.

Drawbacks

A large vine base is heavy compared to other bases.

Attachment Methods

Use hot glue and/or floral wire; wire on large items, such as fruits and novelties; working with the vine's weave, you can insert a pick at an angle into the spaces between the vines after a dab of hot glue has been placed on the end of the pick.

Straw

Advantages

Offers a permeable frame on which to attach any type of material; commercial ones tend to be densely packed and reinforced with wire, making them perfect for heavy items; good for full, lush wreath designs; appearance can be altered by covering the base with moss, fabric, or ribbon, which also creates a surface more receptive to hot glue.

Drawbacks

Base's bulk does not suit dainty, delicate wreath styles; need to cover all of the base with materials.

Attachment Methods

Use floral picks and/or floral pins; larger items, such as fruits or novelties, can be attached with wire or hot glue.

(continued on next page)

WREATH BASE OPTIONS—CONTINUED

Moss

Advantages

Easy to hot-glue items to surface, to pick in flowers, and to insert single stems of flowers or greenery; so attractive that large portions can be left uncovered; easy to make; gives the wreath a natural look.

Drawbacks

Not very strong unless the moss is covering a straw base; rustic look can be unsuitable for certain designs and decor.

Attachment Methods

Use floral picks and/or hot glue; insert single stems of flowers and greenery directly into the base.

Polystyrene

Advantages

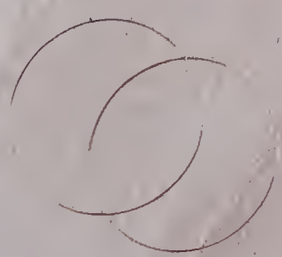
Inexpensive and available in more varieties of thickness, size, and shape than any other type of base; color and surface texture can be altered by wrapping with ribbon or covering with moss or leaves; available with a mirror in the center; larger wire-reinforced bases are available to accommodate heavy materials.

Drawbacks

Beauty of the finished wreath is diminished if any small gaps reveal the polystyrene base; some hot glues are hot enough to melt the polystyrene; not very sturdy unless reinforced with wire.

Attachment Methods

Cover with ribbon or moss secured with floral pins, then attach small items with cool-melt glue.



Single-Wire Ring

Advantages

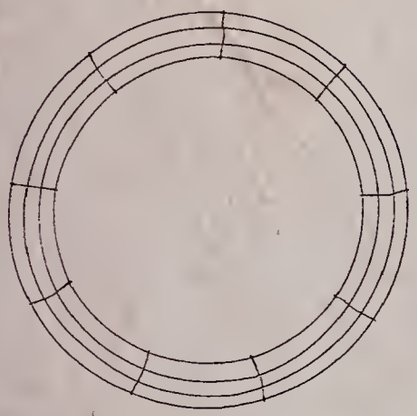
Works well with delicate designs using lightweight materials; can be covered with bunches of materials, such as artemisia or greens, or covered with moss to give the base a broader surface on which to attach flowers.

Drawbacks

Can't accommodate heavy items; all of the base must be covered with materials; hard to work with because materials tend to slip on the surface.

Attachment Methods

Cover the wire with bunches of plant material wrapped with monofilament and then attach them using hot glue or fine-gauge wire.



Multiple-Wire Ring

Advantages

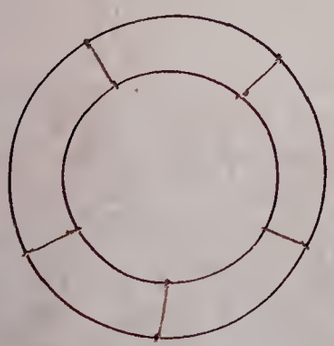
Inner trench can be packed with natural materials or wet floral foam to provide an area in which other materials can nest.

Drawbacks

Can't support heavy items; essentially a specialty base with limited design applications.

Attachment Methods

Cover with plant materials secured with monofilament and then attach them using hot glue or fine-gauge floral wire; fill the trench with moss, pine needles, or herbs, and then use hot glue to attach the natural materials; if the wreath will hang on a wall, secure the materials inside the trench with monofilament or thin-gauge floral wire, and then glue on the materials; or fill the trench with wet floral foam held in place with floral tape, and then pick in materials or insert the stems into the foam.



Double-Wire Ring

Advantages

When covered with decorative paper or ribbon, creates a flat, wide surface, perfect for attaching large, delicate materials that would break if wound around the curves of a foam, vine, or straw base.

Drawbacks

Can't support heavy items; essentially a specialty base with limited design applications.

Attachment Methods

Wrap colored paper or ribbon around both rings and attach it with hot glue; cover with plant materials secured with monofilament and then attach them using hot glue or fine-gauge floral wire.

BASKETS

Just about everyone seems to know someone who collects baskets. What is the fascination with these beautiful and practical objects? Baskets are perhaps one of the oldest nature crafts—they have been made by people of different civilizations for hundreds of years. We can easily imagine the many practical uses our hunter-gatherer ancestors had for baskets. Later, baskets served as traps for game and fish and as carrying and storage containers for farmers. They were made from any wood, vine, leaf, or fiber that could be formed into workable shapes.

Although we no longer rely on baskets for carrying and storage, basketry has remained a popular functional and decorative craft. In fact, the trend in collecting early baskets has turned old relics into expensive antiques. Perhaps some day your woven work of art will become the cherished treasure of a future basket collector.

Basketry Materials

Baskets are still made from common natural materials. But because of the increased number of basket makers and the scarcity of native woods, we now import more and more supplies, particularly rattan core, which is usually referred to as reed. To a large extent, flat reed has replaced oak, ash, and hickory splints, and round reed has replaced oak, willow, and other vinelike materials used for ribbed or twined baskets. Reed is readily available in a wide range of sizes and quantities from craft-, hobby-, weaving-, and basket-supply stores, and from mail-order suppliers. Although some basket makers still harvest their own oak and other hardwoods, you can buy oak splints and other wood for baskets through some basket-supply stores and mail-order suppliers (see "Supply Sources" on page 254). You can also make baskets from grasses, bark, pine needles, twigs, and vines that you collect yourself.

Basket Shapes and Techniques

The basket shapes we use today have been passed along to us from our long-ago relatives; the well-known egg, potato, and melon baskets were originally designed by basket makers in Ireland, Wales, Scotland, and England. Several of the basket projects you'll find in this section are based on these tried-and-true designs. For example, the "Iris & Willow Potato Basket" on page 35 is a charming rendition of this popular shape. The original potato basket was used during the harvest to gather potatoes and was designed to be dragged through the rows while holding a great deal of weight. It uses a ribbed construction made by first shaping a sturdy frame that establishes the intended form before you start weaving. Most are begun with one or two hoops for a rim and handle; ribs are inserted into the hoop lashings to form arcs that outline the shape of the basket. Weavers are then threaded over and under the ribs and back and forth between the rims. Other types of basket construction include plaited (see "Catch-All Basket" on page 32) and coiled (see "Pine-Needle Basket" on page 184 in the chapter on pine needles).

Soaking Basketry Materials

It is best to work with moist and flexible material, achieved by soaking it in warm water. Depending on its thickness, you may need to soak the material for 3 to 30 minutes. Don't let it soak for more than that without checking its condition, or you will wind up with reed or oak that is likely to fray or split when you weave it. If, after 5 minutes, a thin reed weaver feels flexible, it is ready to be removed from the water. Keep your damp materials in a towel or plastic bag while you weave.

Dyeing Basketry Materials

Combining colored weaving material with natural material can give a basket a very beautiful look. You can dye basketry materials with basketry, fabric, or commercial dyes, following the directions on the package.

Start with one-quarter of the amount you've purchased, dissolved in two quarts of almost boiling water. The temperature of the water is very important to successful dyeing; be sure it reaches near boiling. Use a small piece of basketry material to test the shade, leaving it in for about 30 seconds. If the dye bath isn't strong enough, add more dye (up to the entire amount you've bought). If it's too dark, add more water. When the sample piece is the desired color, coil the presoaked basketry material into a loose ring and submerge it in the dye bath for 30 to 45 seconds. Remove it from the dye, allow it to dry (which will help the color set), then rinse it in very hot water until the water runs clear. Another way to help set the color is to soak the dyed reed for 30 to 60 minutes in warm water to which you've added one cup of white vinegar.

To achieve a more natural appearance, use a stain made from walnut hulls. Use the entire nut with the hull. Place the hulls in a nylon pouch or a pair of old stockings and cover them with water. In a few days, you will have a lovely brown stain. For quick results, boil the hulls in water and immediately dip your materials in the stain. For other dye techniques that give oak a natural look, see "White Oak Cat-Head Basket" on page 39.

Basketry Tools

There are a few tools and supplies that are required for nearly every basket you will make. They include:

- Awl
- Basketry clippers or pruning shears (with a soft, plastic handle and narrow tips)
- Clothespins
- Large bucket or pail
- Scissors
- Sharp pencil
- Sharp pocketknife or craft knife
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Tape measure
- Yardstick

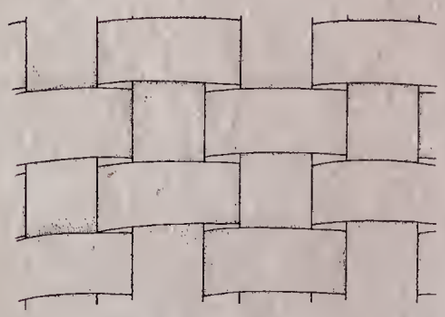
Weaving Variations

All baskets, no matter what their shape or what type of material they are made from, are woven—meaning that one set of materials is interlaced with another. The warp is the stationary element. When you're working with flat reed, the warp is the stake, and the weft is the weaver. With round reed, the warp is the spoke, and the weft is still the weaver. For definitions and illustrations of specific basketry terms, see the "Basket-Making Glossary" on page 28. The "Basket Weave Variations" chart on page 26 defines and illustrates the basic forms, listed in the order of the most commonly used variations.

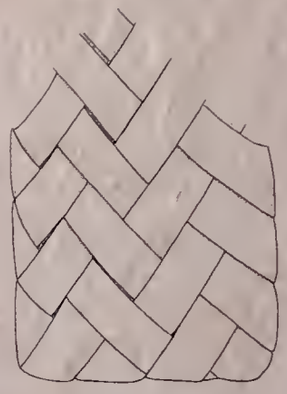
Getting Started

Now it's your turn to make a basket. The projects in this section range from simple to challenging and offer a good representation of different weaving techniques and basket construction. As with many crafts, trial and error is your best ally in learning. With a few basic tools and patient, nimble fingers, you will soon be making great-looking baskets.

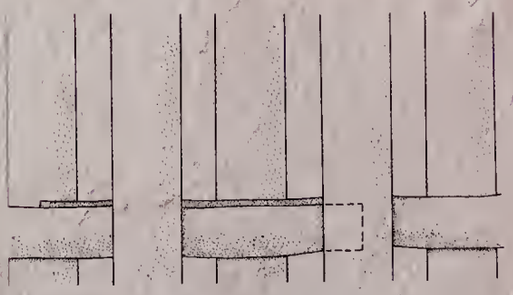
BASKET WEAVE VARIATIONS



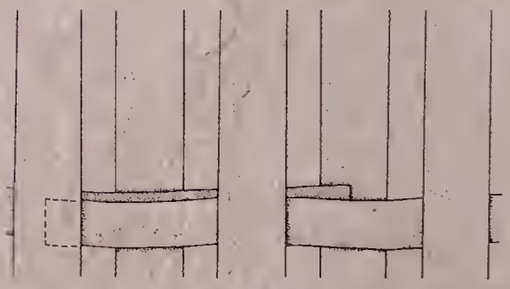
Plain Weaving



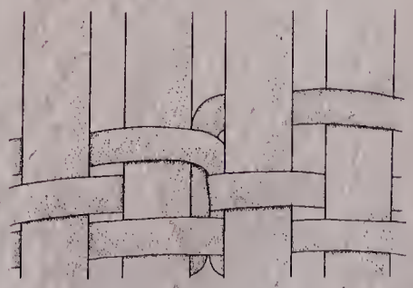
Plaiting



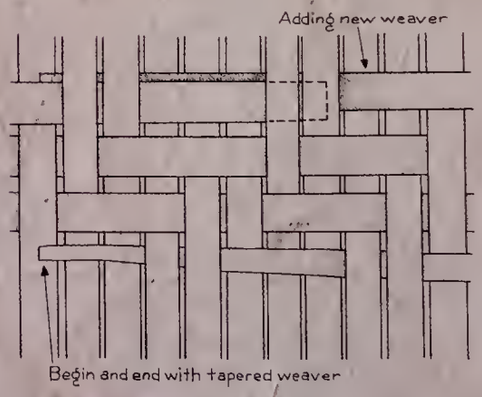
Start-Stop Weaving



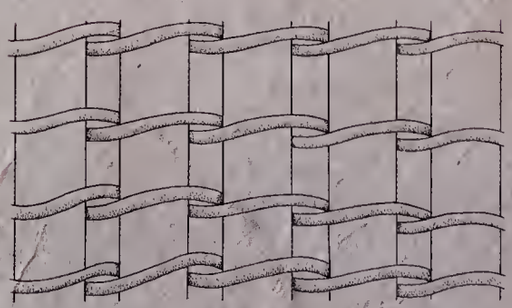
Continuous Weaving



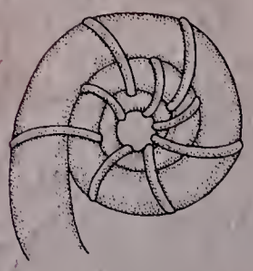
Continuous Weaving



Twill Weaving



Twining



Coiling

Plain Weaving • The simplest and most common form of weaving, done with rigid stakes or spokes and weavers that wrap around the stakes in an over-one-under-one pattern. When using round reed, this is called randing.

Plaiting • The term used in basketry for the interlacing of two flat materials of equal width. Diagonal plaiting is plain weaving with two similar materials interwoven at right angles.

Start-Stop Weaving • Refers to weaving around a base one row at a time, starting and stopping each row. With your flat reed, begin the weaver on the outside of the basket on the outside of a stake. Weave around the basket and end by weaving over and beyond the starting point, cutting the weaver behind the fourth stake.

Continuous Weaving • Weaving done continuously from beginning to end, weaving over the starting point indefinitely, with weavers added periodically. There are several methods of adding new weavers. Working with flat reed, a new weaver is slipped in under the fourth stake from the end of the old weaver (see Figure 4). With round reed, the new weaver is added by tucking it down between two stakes after an over or under stroke.

Twill Weaving • A method of weaving in which a weaver passes over two or more stakes or spokes and under one or more stakes or spokes.

Twining • Usually done with round reed, worked over or around either flat or round reed, with a half-twist at each crossing. It is often used as a locking row around flat bases to hold the stakes in place.

Arrow Weaving • A decorative form of twining, often used to create a simple woven border (see Figures 8, 9, and 10 of the "Catch-All Basket" on page 32).

Coiling • The technique of wrapping a foundation of fibers with thread or other materials into a ropelike strand that is then stitched in concentric circles.

BASKET-MAKING GLOSSARY

Base The bottom of the basket.

Butt To bring the ends of any two pieces together, flush against each other.

Ear The lashing used to secure the intersection of the basket's rim and handle; also the lashing into which the basket's ribs are inserted.

Filling-in The back-and-forth weaving done to fill in a wedge-shaped area that may remain unwoven on a ribbed basket; also called gussetting.

Lasher The piece of reed that wraps around the rim of the basket, securing the rim to the top of the sides.

Packing Pushing each row snugly down beside the previously woven row.

Reed The inner core of the rattan palm that has been cut into flat, round, oval, half-round, or half-oval shapes.

Ribs The round or oval pieces that extend from one side of the basket to the other and form the skeleton of a ribbed basket.

Rims The pieces, inside and out, that fit over the top row of weaving to form an edge and give stability to the sides.

Spokes The materials, usually round reed, which form the base and the rigid framework of a basket—the equivalent of stakes.

Stakes The elements that are woven to form the base and then are upsett or gently turned up to become the upright materials around which the basket is woven.

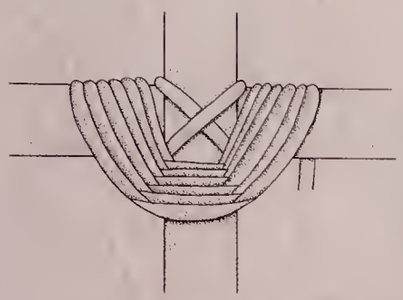
True To measure the woven base, making sure all the sides are the correct length and adjusting them if necessary.

Upsett To bend the basket's stakes up after the base is completed to create vertical elements for weaving the sides.

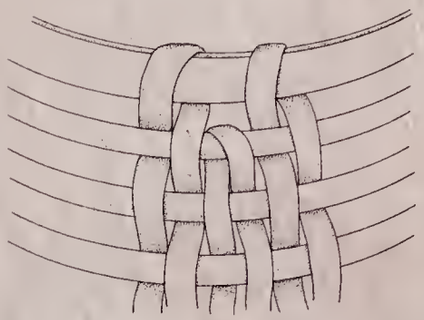
Warp The stationary, usually more rigid, element in weaving; a stake or spoke.

Weaver The flexible fiber used to weave over and under the stakes, spokes, or ribs.

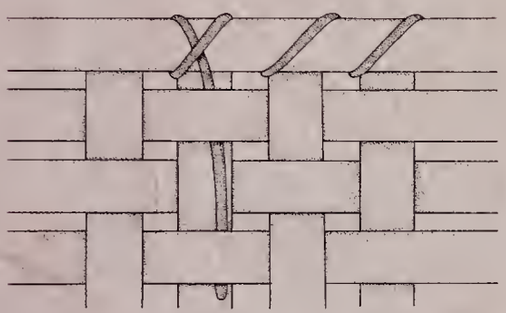
Weft The more flexible weaving element that is interlaced around the warp; the weaver.



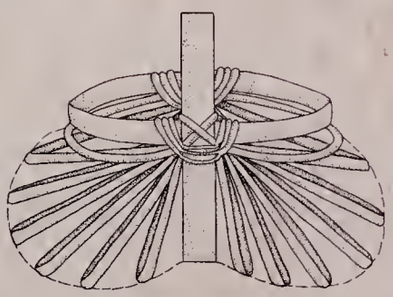
Ear



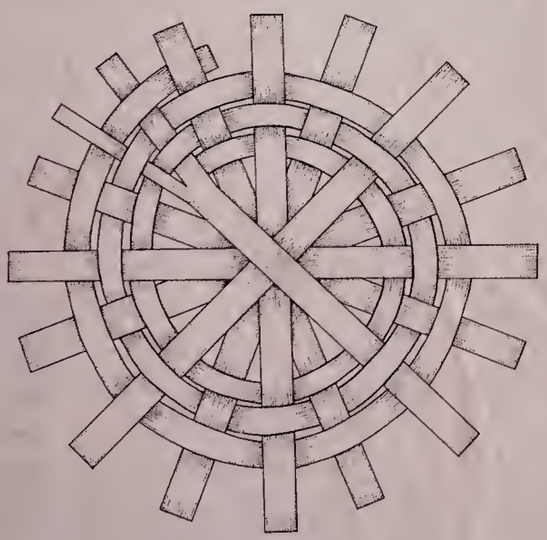
Filling-in



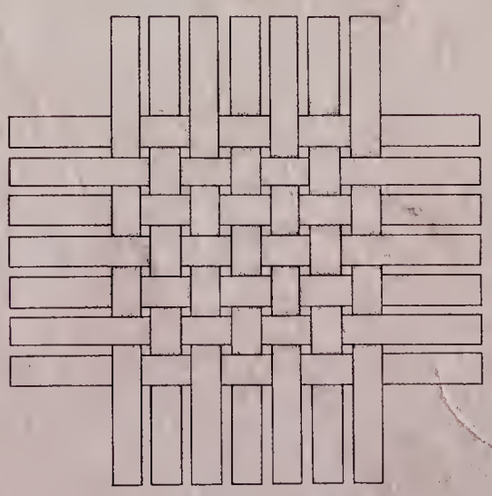
Lasher



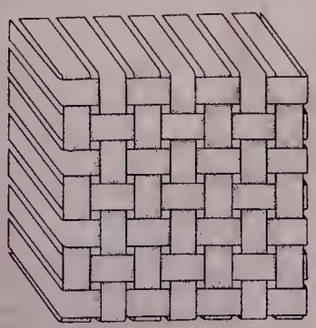
Ribs



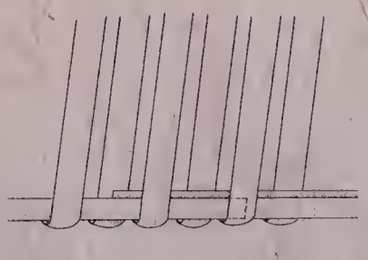
Spokes



Stakes



Upsett



Weaver

These handy baskets are attractive and simple to make. By adding more spokes, you can weave one large enough to store onions. The twining weave is very versatile and almost any shape can be achieved once the basic technique is mastered.

Garlic Basket

WHAT YOU NEED

100 yards of #4 round reed

Large bucket

Basketry, fabric, or commercial dye in your choice of color

Basketry clippers or pruning shears

WHAT YOU DO

1 Dye your reed in the bucket following the directions in "Dyeing Basketry Materials" on page 25. Then soak all of the dyed reed in warm water for 20 minutes or until it is pliable.

2 Cut six pieces of round reed, each 36 inches long, to use for spokes. Place three reeds over and perpendicular to the other three at their centers. Begin the base

by twining a long piece of reed (at least 50 inches) over and under the six spokes, alternately, making three revolutions (see Figure 1).

3 As you begin the fourth revolution, continue to twine, but this time open out each spoke like a wheel and upsett the twining by creating a half twist between one spoke and then a pair of spokes, going over and under them (see Figure 2).

4 You will be shaping the sides of the basket by gently turning the spokes up as you twine. Twine up the basket three times around. Keep the weaving flat by creating a ¼-inch space between each round of twining, exposing the spokes. Keep the spacing even between each row. End each weaver by tucking the ends into the weaving beside a spoke. Each weaver will alternately appear on the inside and then on the outside of the basket as the work moves in a spiral form from the base to the rim.

5 Now you are ready to begin your simple closed border. Soak the spokes for five minutes or until they are pliable. Weave the shaded spoke, marked 1, under spoke 2, then over spokes 3 and 4, to the inside of the basket (see Figure 3). The rule is "under a spoke, over two spokes, and in." Go around the basket until all of the spokes are woven to the inside, then clip them closely against a spoke. A hanger can be tied on now by coiling a short piece of reed and weaving the ends through the basket border until they are secure.

Note: An easy adaptation is the onion storage basket. Add six more spokes and enlarge the base until it is about 6 inches in diameter. Twine up the side for 8 inches and finish the basket with a closed border.

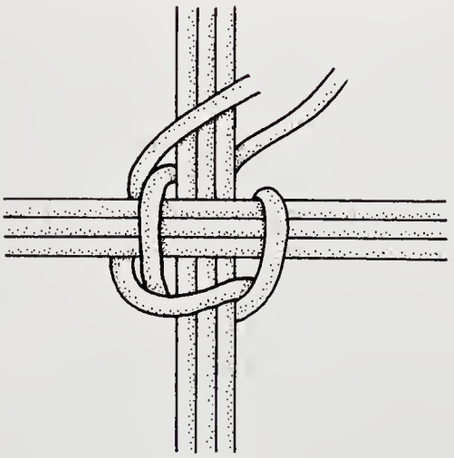


Figure 1

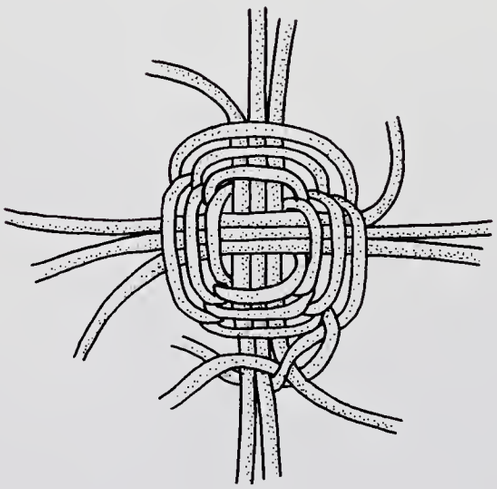


Figure 2

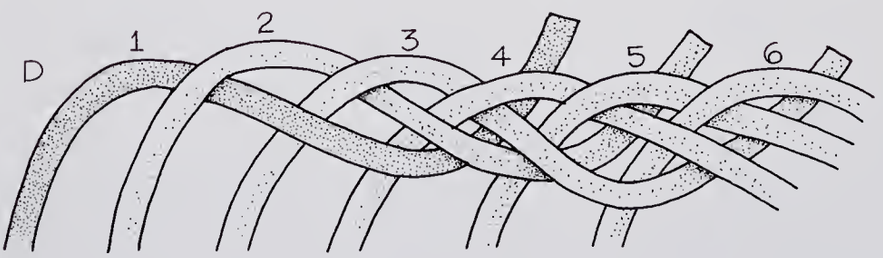


Figure 3

The designer intended this basket to catch mail or messages, but it's perfect as a napkin holder.

Catch-All Basket

What You Need

13.3 yards of #2 round reed

1 D-handle, 8 × 12 inches (available at basket-supply stores)

21.6 yards of flat reed, 3/8 inch wide

1 yard of ash, 1 inch wide

9 yards of flat or flat-oval reed, 11/64 inch wide

2 yards of flat-oval reed, 1/2 inch wide

1 yard of #2 or #3 sea grass

Tape measure

Basketry clippers or pruning shears

2 large buckets

Basketry, fabric, or commercial dyes in burgundy and dark green

Sandpaper

Pencil

4 to 6 clothespins

Sharp pocketknife or craft knife

What You Do

1 Soak 8 yards of #2 round reed in warm water for five to ten minutes. Dye 4 yards with the burgundy dye, following the directions in "Dyeing Basketry Materials" on page 25. Repeat this process with the other 4 yards of reed and the dark green dye.

2 Sand the D-handle. Measure the bottom of it (from side to side) and make a pencil mark in the center. From the 3/8-inch-wide flat reed, cut four pieces 28 inches long and nine pieces 26 inches long. Mark the center of each piece on the rough side. Soak all the pieces in warm

water for five to ten minutes until they are pliable. Lay the four 28-inch pieces as shown in Figure 1, aligning all the center marks. Leave about half an inch between the pieces. Beginning with the center piece, weave the shorter pieces of flat reed through in plain weave. The center marks of both center pieces should align. The woven base should resemble Figure 2 and measure approximately 4½ × 7½ inches.

3 Soak a long piece of undyed #2 round reed in warm water for five to ten minutes until it is pliable and twine around the base for two rows. Treat the handle as a stake and twine around it also, even though it is upright. At this point, there is a top weaver and a bottom weaver. The top weaver goes under the next stake and continues to do so. Figure 3 shows the beginning of twining. When you reach the starting point, continue twining around the base again. End the twining after the second row by tucking the ends under the two twined rows, one at a time, on two successive stakes, as shown in Figure 4.

4 Upsett all the stakes by bending them over onto themselves toward the inside of the basket, as shown in Figure 5. They will not stand upright, but more importantly, a crease has been made at the base of each stake.

5 Soak one piece of ⅜-inch-wide flat reed in warm water for five to ten minutes until it is pliable. Begin by placing the end of the reed on the outside of the center of either the front or the back of the basket, and weave over one stake and under the next, making every other stake upright as you weave around it. To check yourself, make sure the weaver goes under the handle on the first row. Leave the "unders" lying down, as you will weave around them and make them stand on the next row. Pinch the weaver at the corners on the first row. On subsequent rows, let the weavers "round" the corners with no pinch. End the first and all rows as shown in Figure 6 on page 34, by weaving over the beginning of the piece to the fourth stake. Cut the weaver and start the next row on another side of the basket. Weave over the stakes that were "unders" on the last row. Repeat these two rows until there is a total of five rows around the basket.

6 Soak a long piece of each color of the dyed #2 round reed in warm water for five to ten minutes until they are pliable. Place the end of one color behind any stake and the end of the other colored reed behind the next stake. Twine around the basket as shown in Figure 7 on page 34, ending on the stake before the starting stake. Make a "step-up" by moving the farthest right weaver over one stake to the right, behind the next, and out to the front. Move the other weaver over one stake to the right, behind the next one, and out to the front, as shown in Figure 8 on page 34. This is the first part of a decorative twining called arrow weave.

7 Now, do one row of reverse twining, but this time move the left weaver under the right weaver and behind the next stake. Repeat with each "left" weaver. End the row of reverse twining as shown in Figure 9 on page 34, taking the ends of both weavers behind the beginning spokes and going under the weaving already in place. Figure 10 on page 34 shows the two rows completed, creating one band of arrow weave. Next, weave in one row of the soaked 1-inch-wide ash in regular plain weave. Repeat the entire procedure with two more pieces of dyed #2 round reed to make two more rows of arrow weave. Then weave four rows of plain weave with the ⅜-inch-wide flat reed.

8 To make the back of the basket higher than the front, you must weave several rows of 11/64-inch-wide flat or flat oval reed to gradually build the height in back. With a sharp knife, taper the end of one long piece of soaked 11/64-inch-wide reed for about 5 inches, making it little more than threadlike at the beginning and gradually becoming wider until it reaches its normal width.

9 Hold the basket in your hands and look at the front. Turn the basket

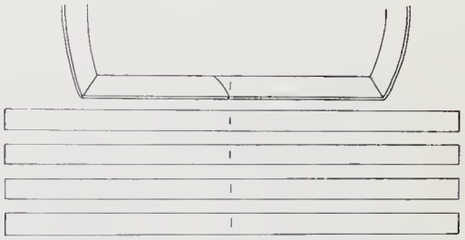


Figure 1

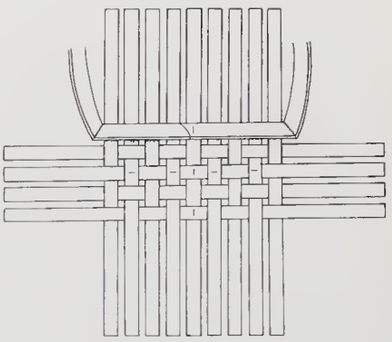


Figure 2

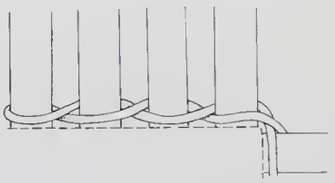


Figure 3

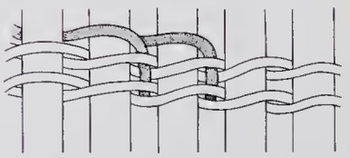


Figure 4

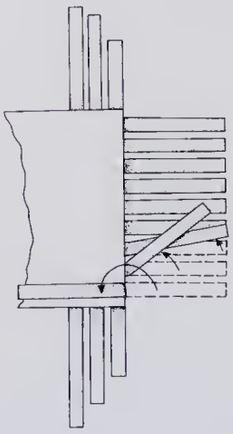


Figure 5

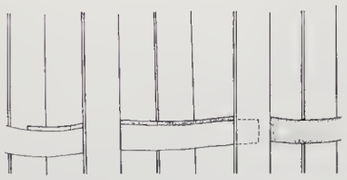


Figure 6

Figure 7

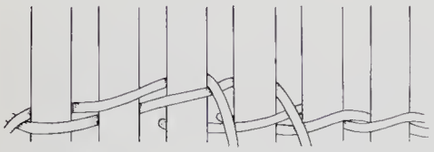


Figure 8

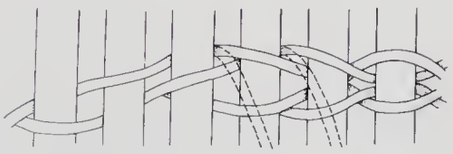


Figure 9

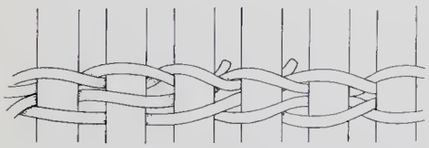


Figure 10

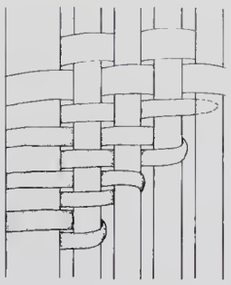


Figure 11

Figure 12

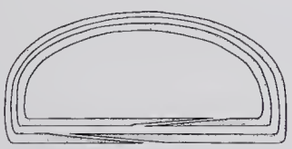


Figure 13

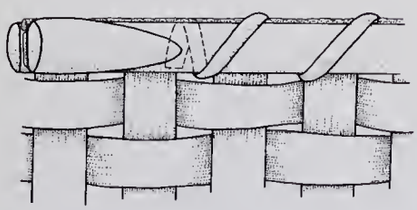


Figure 14

clockwise a quarter turn. You are now looking at the right end of the basket. Designate the 1st stake on the left side as stake 1 and mentally number the others all the way around to the last stake on the other end. The 5th stake is the handle on the one side, as is the 15th on the other side. The last stake is the 19th. Start the tapered weaver behind stake 1 and weave over and under all the way around the basket to stake 19 on the other side. Turn the weaver around stake 19 and return, still weaving over and under, until you reach stake 2 on the first side. This time, turn the weaver around stake 2 and weave back to stake 18 on the other side. Turn again and return to stake 3. On each successive row you skip the next numbered stake, which means you weave around one fewer stake. You continue to skip one stake until there are only nine stakes left to weave around on the back of the basket. Make a turn around each end-stake, taper the end of the weaver until it is threadlike, and end it behind the 1st stake, as shown in Figure 11. Then, with a long piece of soaked #2 round reed, twine three rows around the top of the basket. End the pieces by tucking the ends into the twining.

10 For the rim, measure a piece of ½-inch-wide flat oval reed that is long enough to circle the top of the basket twice, plus about 6 inches for overlap, and cut the piece in half. Soak the two pieces in warm water for five or ten minutes until they are pliable. Place one piece around the inside of the basket, covering the three rows of twining. Hold it in place with clothespins and allow the ends to overlap 2 to 3 inches. Mark the reed, top and bottom, where the overlap occurs. With the second piece, repeat the procedure on the outside of the basket, again covering the three rows of twining, securing the reed with clothespins, and marking the place where the overlap occurs.

11 Remove the two pieces of reed and bevel the ends with a sharp knife so that the overlapped area is no thicker than a single piece of ½-inch-wide flat oval, as shown in Figure 12. Reposition the two rim pieces on the basket. Place the splices (overlapped areas) near but not opposite each other, as shown in Figure 13. Hold them in place with clothespins.

12 Place the piece of sea grass between the two rim pieces. With a long, soaked piece of $^{11}/_{64}$-inch-wide reed, begin lashing the rim pieces together, as shown in Figure 14. Push the end of the reed up under the inside rim, over the wall of the basket, and down to the outside. The end can be cut later, flush with the bottom of the rim. Take the lasher into every space between the stakes. When the starting point is reached, either reverse the direction of the lashing and X-lash, or end after a single row the same way it began by hooking the end of the lasher over the basket wall, or hide the end behind a weaver inside the basket.

Iris & Willow Potato Basket

Potato baskets were once used to drag the harvest in from the fields. This smaller version uses variegated colors and textures for a new take on a traditional form.

What You Need

- 2 strips of dried bark, ⅓ × 25 inches
- 4 willow twigs, ⅓ × 36 inches
- 18 willow twigs, ¼ to ⅓ × 25 inches
- 15 to 20 weeping-willow twigs, ⅛ × 30 inches
- 125 dried iris leaves
- Large bucket
- Old towel
- Tape measure
- Basketry clippers or pruning shears
- Sharp pocketknife or craft knife

What You Do

1 Reconstitute your dried bark and iris leaves by soaking them in warm water for 15 to 20 minutes or until they are flexible. Wrap them in a damp towel to absorb the extra moisture.

2 Using the four 36-inch-long willow twigs, fashion a hoop 9 inches in diameter (see "Making a Vine Wreath Base" on page 18 for instructions on making a grapevine wreath base). This hoop is your basket rim.

3 Cut three of the 25-inch-long willow twigs so that each is 22 inches long. Hold the hoop and place one of these

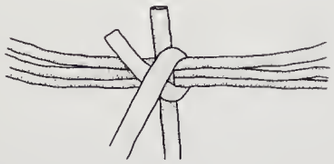


Figure 1

twigs against the outside, with 2 inches of the twig rising up past the top of the rim. With one of the bark strips, form an X over the top of this first rib to hold it in place; pull the bark tightly (see Figure 1). Then wrap the bark up and over the rim once, securing both the loose end and the first rib (see Figure 2).

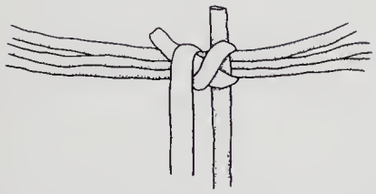


Figure 2

4 Place the second 22-inch-long willow twig 1 inch away from this wrapped rib, with 2 inches of the twig rising up past the top of the rim. As in Step 3, form another X with the same strip of bark by wrapping the bark up and over the rim once, securing both the loose end and the second rib (see Figure 3). Then secure the third 22-inch-long willow twig in the same manner.

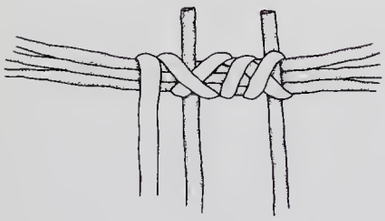


Figure 3

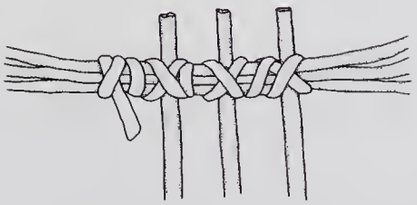


Figure 4

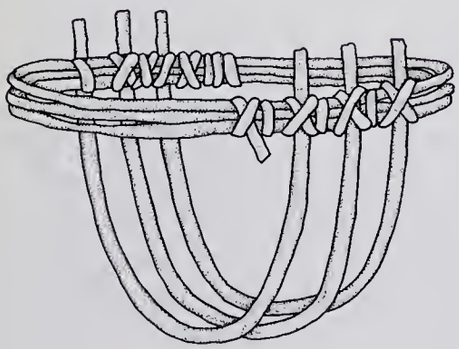


Figure 5

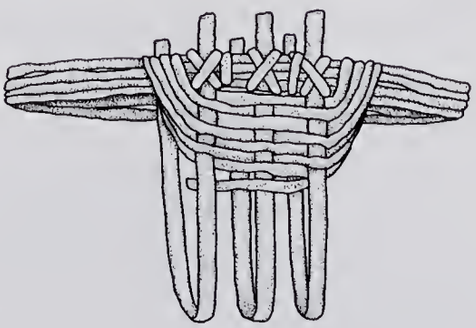


Figure 6

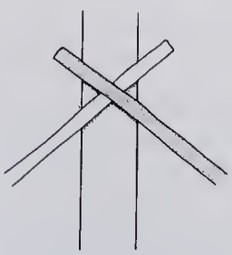


Figure 7

5 Tie off the bark strip with two complete wraps around the rim. Tuck in the loose end by slipping it under and through the last wrap. Leave an end about ½ inch long and clip off the excess (see Figure 4).

6 Bring the opposite ends of the willow twigs to the opposite side of the hoop. Repeat Steps 3, 4, and 5 to make your three willow ribs form the foundation of a bowl shape (see Figure 5).

7 Now that both sides are secure, you can start weaving with the weeping-willow twigs. Start with the small, tip end of the twig. Use an over-under-over weave and include the rim in your weaving. Weave in this way on each side of the basket until your weaving measures about 2 inches down from the rim, at the center rib (see Figure 6). Always work from side to side in order to achieve a balanced look. When adding a new weaver, place it over the old one, on the inside of the basket and on top of the ribs. You will be forming an X that will be held in by the rows of weaving that follow (see Figure 7).

8 Now you are going to add ten new ribs, using the remaining 25-inch-long willow twigs—this gives the basket a total of 16 ribs. As you are putting in these new ribs, use a sharp knife to trim the ends to a sharp point so that they will slip easily into your weaving.

9 The ten new ribs are labeled A through J (see Figure 8 on page 37). Add each in the following order:

- Fit one end of rib A into the top "pocket" formed by your weaving. This is the rib nearest the rim; it should protrude about ⅓ inch farther. Trim the other end of the rib and insert it into the weaving on the opposite side of the rim, in the same location.
- Fit rib J, cutting and adjusting its length to match rib A.
- Insert rib B directly under rib A.

- Insert rib I directly under rib J.
- Insert rib C under rib B.
- Insert rib H under rib I.
- Insert rib D in the next pocket formed by rib 3.
- Insert rib G in the pocket formed by rib 1.
- Insert rib E between ribs D and 3.
- Insert rib F between ribs G and 1.

The final shape of your basket will be determined by the lengths of these new ribs, so you need to make sure that the sides of the basket form an even, symmetrical shape.

10 Starting where you left off with the weeping willow, now weave with the iris. In order to form the rope-look of this basket, you need to twist the iris as you weave. Continue with the over-under-over pattern and include the new ribs. When you are nearing the end of a piece of iris, add another one by placing the new one on top of the old one and twisting them together as if they were one piece. The twist will hold the new iris leaf in place.

11 As your weaving progresses, you will need to fill in or gusset, otherwise you will soon see a V-shaped form in the unwoven area (see Figure 9). When you have about 4 inches of weaving (measured down from the rim, on the center rib), you will need to add a gusset. Because every natural basket is unique, you may have to gusset more than once. When adding a gusset, you don't weave all the way to the rim. Instead, you form a stair-step pattern by turning your iris back on a rib. Do not return to the same rib; do not turn on the bottom ribs—1, 2, and 3 in Figure 8—of your basket (see Figure 10). Remember to gusset in each quadrant of the basket. After a gusset, always do a row of weaving that goes up to the rim.

12 To form the "built-in" handle, leave spaces the width of your hand by weaving only up to the first spoke on each side (ribs A and J).

13 Working toward the center, continue weaving until both sides meet. When you are finished, trim the tops of the original three ribs so they stick up about ½ inch past the rim.

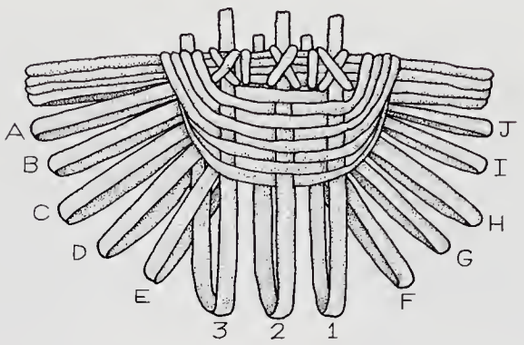


Figure 8

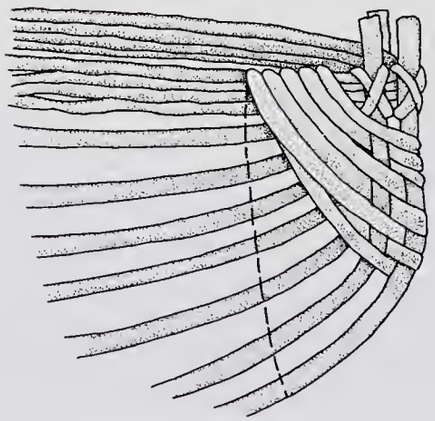


Figure 9

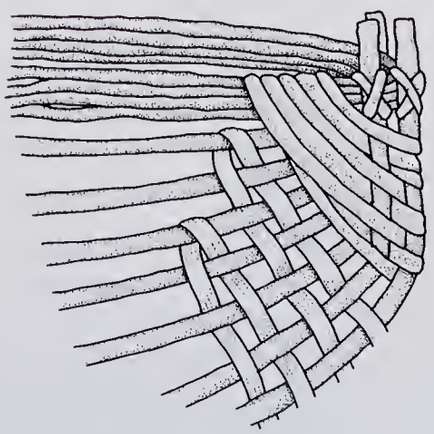


Figure 10

Random weaving, shown to eye-catching effect in this platter, is more sculptural than technical. It is best undertaken after you have made more traditional baskets and are comfortable with basketry-weaving techniques.

Random-Weave Platter

What You Need

33 yards of #7 round reed

50 to 75 yards of flat reed, ¾ inch wide

Basketry, fabric, or commercial dyes in your choice of 2 or 3 colors

Large bucket

Basketry clippers or pruning shears

What You Do

1 Dye all of the round and flat reed following the directions in "Dyeing Basketry Materials" on page 25. Dye the flat reed all one color and the round reed two or three complementary colors.

2 Soak all of the dyed round reed in warm water for 20 minutes or until it is pliable. Use it to form a basket rim 13 inches in diameter by coiling the reed around itself three times. Cut the end and tuck it into the coil.

3 Clip the rest of the round reed as needed to lengths that are comfortable for you to work with, such as 4 feet or longer. Start the body of the basket by crossing one length of round reed through any single strand of the coiled rim and across to the opposite side of the rim. Crisscross a few times through the rim and down across the bottom and then back through the rim. The reed, with its round shape, will curve naturally into a shallow bowl or platter shape; you won't have to bend it. Weave a few more lengths of round reed into the body without connecting it to the rim, weaving over, under, and around the original diagonals in a random fashion, creating a fairly flat platter shape.

4 Soak the flat reed for 20 minutes or until it is pliable. You can clip the reed as needed to lengths ranging from 7 to 12 inches, or you can work with 4-foot lengths and clip the ends as you weave. Weave lengths of flat reed into the basket body, going over and under the round reeds. Keep covering up the holes in the random weaving, but do not go back over the same areas. Use as much flat reed as you like until your platter has a form.

5 With the round reed, fill in any spaces that seem to need it. To give the basket a flat base, push it down on a table top while the reed is still damp.

6 Fasten the basket body to the coiled rim by untwining some of the round reed from the woven body and wrapping it around the rim and back to the body again. Clip any unsightly reed ends; clip them close to the body and on the underside, if possible.

White Oak Cat-Head Basket

What You Need

50 yards of split or shaved white oak weavers, 1/8 inch wide and 3/100 inch thick

1 rim of split or shaved white oak, 27 inches long, shaved round, and 3/16 inch wide

18 stakes of split or shaved white oak, 25 inches long, 3/8 inch wide, and 1/25 inch thick

2 rims of half-round oak, 26 inches long and 3/8 inch wide

2 blocks of wood (any kind), 5½ inches square and ¼ to ½ inch wide

1 tablespoon of iron (ferrous) sulfate (available in drugstores)

Enamel or stainless steel pot

Large bucket

5- to 6-inch-diameter round container with straight sides

Spool of string

Scissors

4 to 6 clothespins

Awl or small screwdriver

Sharp pocketknife or craft knife

Tape measure

Spray bottle filled with water

6-inch-diameter bowl

Electric drill with 1/16-inch drill bit

Curved upholstery needle

Spool of navy waxed-linen thread

Fingernail clipper

Basketry clippers or pruning shears

This basket seems to have originated with the Shakers and derives its name from its resemblance—when turned upside down—to a cat's head.

What You Do

1 Dye blue all 50 yards of the 1/8-inch-wide weavers and the 27-inch-long rim as follows: In the enamel or stainless steel pot, heat to almost boiling a mixture of one teaspoon iron sulfate dissolved in a gallon of water. (The amount of iron sulfate you need is approximate because the chemical content of water varies across the country.)

2 Immerse the weavers and rim in the dye bath. The tannic acid in oak acts as a mordant to fix the dye. If you are cutting your own oak, be sure to cut it to the desired width before you dye it; if it's cut after you dye it, there will be a white edge

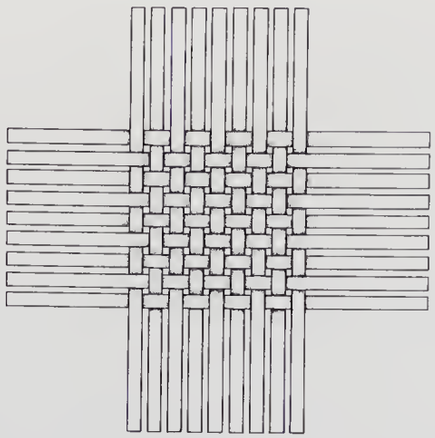


Figure 1

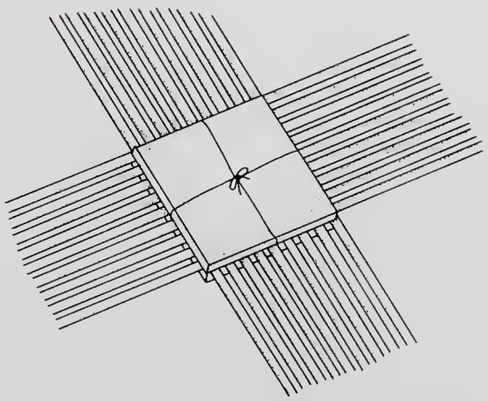


Figure 2

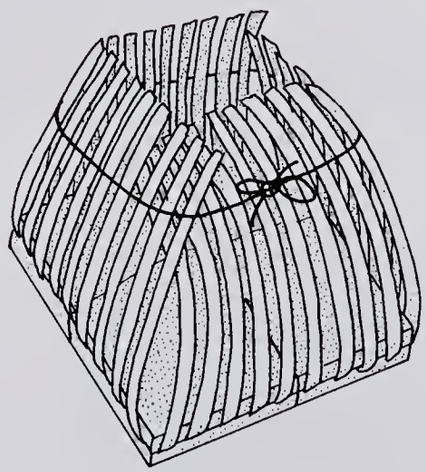


Figure 3

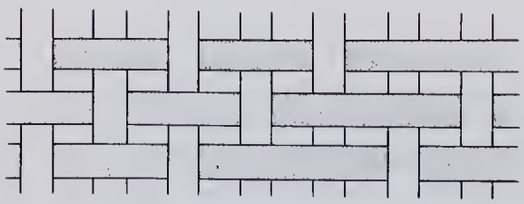


Figure 4

on the oak. Check the color after about 15 minutes. The dye bath usually takes one to two hours. Remember that the oak will look darker when it is wet; heartwood will dye darker than sapwood. When you are happy with the color, rinse the oak until the water runs clear and let the oak dry before using it.

3 Soak the 18 undyed stakes in clear warm water for 30 minutes or until they are moist and pliable.

4 Soak the two natural-colored rims of half-round oak in clear, warm water for 30 to 60 minutes. When they are pliable, roll them, one with the flat side in and one with the flat side out. Put them in the round container and let the rims dry in this position; this makes it easier to work with them. Repeat this process with the blue rim.

5 To form the base, place nine soaked stakes on a table, about ⅜ inch apart, with their ends aligned. Weave the other nine stakes over and under them, making sure the weaving is alternated in each row (see Figure 1). Measure and true the base to a 5½-inch square. Place the basket base on top of one of the 5½-inch blocks of wood. Make sure the woven bottom fits the block exactly. Place the other block on top and tightly tie the blocks around the woven base with string (see Figure 2).

6 Pull the stakes up very gently, bending each one upward; do not fold or crease them. Tie the stakes together with string so they dry in a pleasing shape (see Figure 3). Make the effort now to position the stakes so that all the sides look evenly sloped; if one side is uneven at this stage, it will be very hard to make the basket symmetrical as you proceed. If necessary, use clothespins to hold the string and stakes in place.

7 When the stakes are dry, remove the clothespins and string, but leave the wooden squares in place. Start weaving at a corner; tuck the end of a weaver under a corner stake and weave over-under-over. When you reach the starting stake again, skip over two stakes and continue weaving. Each time around, you must go under the first stake that you skipped in the previous row, and again skip over two stakes; this creates an upwardly spiraling pattern around

the four corners at the bottom of the basket (see Figure 4). Make sure the oval side of the weaver is on the outside of the basket. Complete three rows in this way. When one weaver is used up, cut it off on top of a stake. Unravel the weaver back several stakes. With a sharp knife, peel off some wood from the underside of both this weaver and the new weaver. Overlap the four stakes. The new weaver should blend right in. As these three rows are woven, pull the corner stakes toward each other.

8 After these three rows of weaving, remove the wooden squares. Weave now in a basic over-under-over pattern. As you weave, be sure to pull the corners toward each other to begin the shaping of the cat-head bottom. There are two ways you can shape the basket: One technique is to pull the corner stakes together while weaving flat; this bows the sides up. The second technique is to mist the bottom with water to soften the oak. Put your knee in the center of the bottom from the outside and mash the bottom around your knee frequently as you weave.

9 The curved sides of this basket should come out and up very gradually (see Figure 5). When the side of the basket is 1 inch high, you should have woven about 11 rows; several of the first rows do not rise vertically. The circumference at the top should now be 29 inches, with a base circumference of 22 inches. At 2 inches high, the circumference should be 31½ inches. From 2 inches to 4 inches high, the circumference should stay about the same to give a straight look to the sides.

10 Rewet your stakes with water from the spray bottle and gently pull them in toward the center of the basket. Tie them together at the top to form a tepee shape. Allow the stakes to dry. Pack the weavers by inserting the awl or screwdriver in between two stakes and pushing the weaver down against the one below it. Continue weaving until you get the sides back up to 4 inches. As you weave, push the stakes toward the center of the basket to decrease the circumference; continue to pack the weavers down tightly.

11 Rewet the stakes with water from the spray bottle and wedge the small bowl inside the basket to straighten the stakes (see Figure 6). When the stakes are dry, remove the bowl and repack the weavers. Weave until the basket is 6¼ inches high with a circumference of about 22½ inches. You are now ready to finish off the weaving. To make the top level, weave until you reach the stake where you first started weaving. For a distance of five to six stakes, gradually reduce the width of the weavers you are using until you are weaving with one that is the width of a thread. Weave the end of that one behind a stake.

Designer Tip

The handsome cat-head basket shown on page 39 was made with white oak splints that the designers harvested from trees they felled themselves. You can buy oak splints and other oak components through basket-supply stores (see "Supply Sources" on page 254). The basket can be made either with split or shaved oak. Be sure to put the smooth side of the shaved oak to the outside of the basket; split oak is the same on both sides. Oak is more difficult to work with than reed, so you may want to make a few reed baskets before you tackle this one. You can substitute reed for oak, but the basket will not be as sturdy.

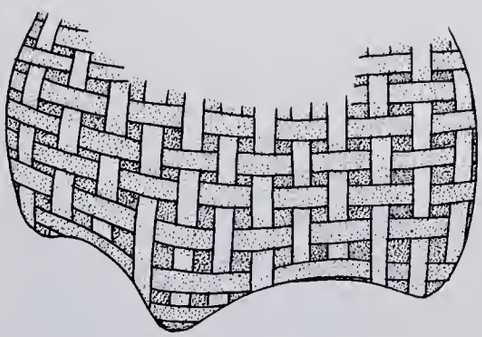


Figure 5

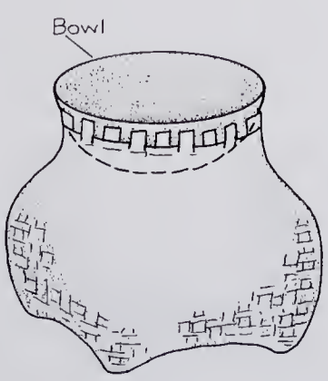


Figure 6

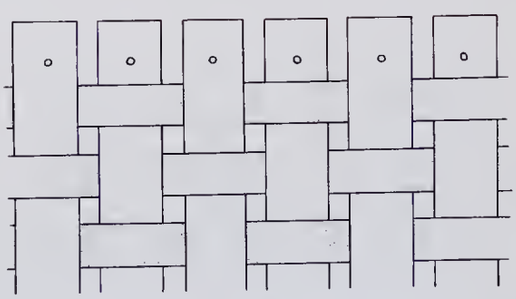


Figure 7

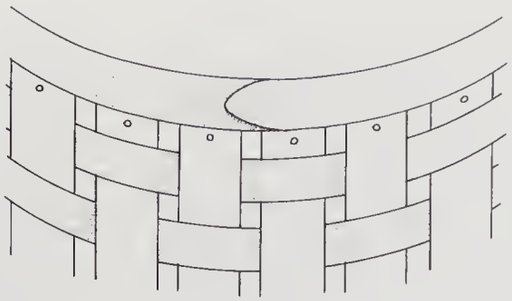


Figure 8

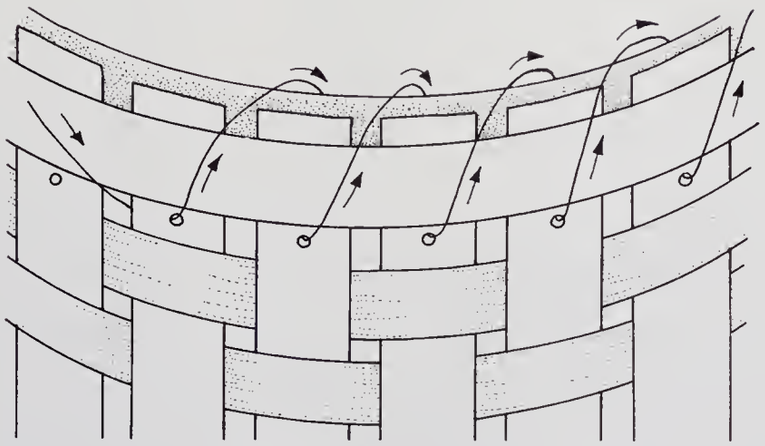


Figure 9

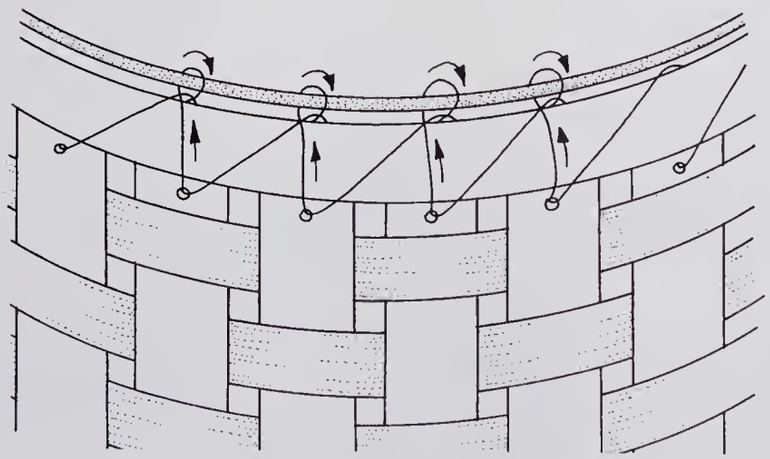


Figure 10

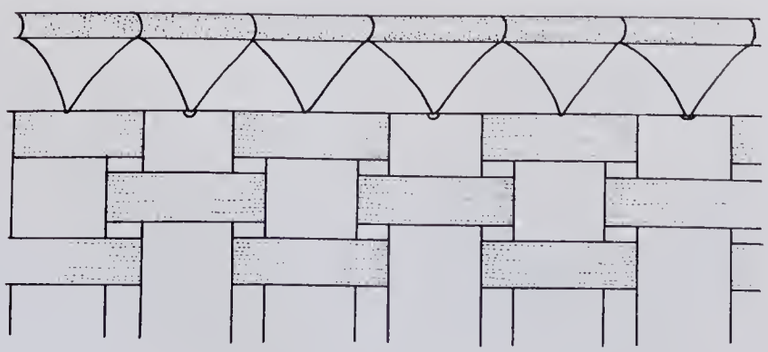


Figure 11

12 With the drill, make holes in each stake just above the last row of weavers. Cut the stakes at right angles about ⅜ inch above this last row of weaving (see Figure 7 on page 41). The stakes must not be higher than the rim. With a clothespin, hold the natural-colored rims in place, with the flat sides of the rims against the stakes. Overlap the ends of the rims 2 to 2½ inches. With a knife, trim down the overlaps on the sides that touch so that the total thickness of the overlap is the same as the original thickness of the rim (see Figure 8).

13 Thread the curved needle with a long piece of the waxed-linen thread and sew the rims onto the basket. Leave a 2-inch-long tail of thread to tie to the end of the thread when you are finished sewing. Starting at the back of the stake, come through the hole, around the rim, behind the stake, and through the hole of the next stake (see Figure 9). When the rim is sewn on, go back through the first hole in preparation to sew on the round, blue rim.

14 Use clothespins to hold the rim in place (it should be trimmed in the same manner as the natural-colored rim so that the overlap is tapered). The lashing is now reversed; at the top of the natural-colored rim, go under the linen thread that is there. Go behind the blue rim, over the top to the front, under the linen thread again, behind the natural-colored rim, and into the next hole to the left (see Figures 10 and 11).

15 To tie off the threads, knot the 2-inch-long tail of thread hanging inside the basket and use the curved needle to weave it over a stake or two. Cut it close and mash it against another strand of thread; the wax will hold the threads in place. Use the fingernail clipper to clip away any "hairs" that may be on the basket.

For more information on gathering these materials and for specific basket projects, *see "Bark" on page 10, "Pine Needles" on page 182, "Twigs" on page 221, and "Vines" on page 231.*

BERRIES

The ever-popular red holly berry conjures up warm remembrances of the winter holidays; but don't think of berries as appropriate only for Christmas nature crafts. Berries can be delightful decorative accents at any time of the year.

Berries provide the nature crafter with attractive components for many types of projects, including wreaths, centerpieces, and topiaries. They come in a variety of sizes and colors: plump, red cranberries; tiny, pink pepperberries; variegated orange bittersweet berries; delicate, light green eucalyptus berries; and subtle teal spruce berries. All of these berries can provide just the right touch to many floral projects, and they combine well with projects using fruits and vegetables.

Many popular berries, such as pepperberries and canella berries, are available at craft-supply stores. Canella berries are often dyed in a range of colors to match your palette. But a simple stroll through your backyard may reward you with an array of berries free for the picking. Berries grow singly, on separate stalks, in umbrella formations, and in other kinds of clusters. They grow on herbs, woody plants with needles, woody plants with broad leaves, vines and creeping shrubs, small trees, and many other locations.

You can use the berries fresh, or you can pick them and let them air-dry (see "Air Drying" on page 73). Berries are also available in silk and plastic versions, and their colors and textures can fool even the loyal naturalist. Many designers mix in a few artificial berries with the real thing, as the "Holiday Wreath" on page 44 magnificently demonstrates.

Berries can be hot-glued onto your project individually or in groups, but the easiest way to attach berries to a floral project, such as a wreath or a swag, is to hot-glue or wire them to a floral pick in small clusters.

Popular Berries for Craft Projects

- Bayberries
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cannella berries
- Cranberries
- Holly berries
- Juniper berries
- Mistletoe
- Pepperberries
- Spruce berries

Don't Touch!

When you come across a plant and each of its leaves has three leaflets and the berries are smooth, the plant is poison ivy; if the berries are hairy, the plant is poison oak. If each leaf has four or more leaflets, it's poison sumac. Don't touch the leaves or the berries of these plants. Don't eat any berry unless you are absolutely, positively sure it is safe for human consumption. (Most plant books contain photographs of poisonous varieties.)

Berries, exotic cones, and pods combine to achieve stunning results in this elegant holiday wreath.

Holiday Wreath

What You Need

- 50 acorns without caps or 3 bunches of artificial grapes
- 2 dried poppy seed heads
- 12-inch-diameter grapevine wreath base
- 3 begun fruit pods
- 4 rose cones
- 2 spider cones
- 4 badam fruit pods
- 4 menzeii cones
- 12 stems of dried bay leaves, 6 inches long
- 7 stems of dried dusty miller, 6 inches long
- 1 small bunch of ornamental grass, 4 inches long
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks
- Acrylic spray paints in red, black, and gold metallic
- Clear acrylic spray
- Spool of fine-gauge floral wire
- Wire cutters
- Floral picks
- Floral tape
- 1 small handful of white, unspun wool
- 24 inches of gold-trimmed red velvet wired ribbon, 3 inches wide
- Scissors

What You Do

1 If you are using acorns, hot-glue them onto the base. Set aside 15 acorns and spray the remaining acorns with red acrylic paint. Standing about 2 feet away, mist the red acorns with black paint to make them more of a cherry color. Then, using the gold paint, spray the set-aside acorns or 15 of the artificial grapes gold. Lightly spray one-quarter of the pods, cones, and poppy seed heads with the gold paint. When they are dry, spray some of the painted acorns with clear acrylic and mist some of them with gold paint. If you are using artificial grapes, spray them with clear acrylic. Let all the materials dry.

2 In a symmetrical pattern around the wreath base, hot-glue the pods and cones to the base in this order: begun fruit pods, rose cones, spider cones, badam fruit pods, and menzeii cones, being sure to place some of each kind on the inner and outer rims and on the front of the wreath.

3 Hot-glue small bunches of the cherry-colored acorns or clear-glossed grapes to fill in some of the spaces around the base and at the top center. Hot-glue the bay leaf stems to the base, inserting them behind the cones and pods. Hot-glue the poppy seed heads and the gold acorns to the base, making sure to hot-glue some to the apex of the badam or inside the begun fruit pods.

4 Wire the seven stems of dusty miller to floral picks and then wrap the stems with floral tape. Pick them into the top

center of the wreath and halfway down the wreath behind the acorns on both sides—on the inner and outer rims and at the bottom of the wreath.

5 Hot-glue little bits of wool in an even fashion around the wreath.

6 Make a full, two-loop bow with the wired ribbon; cut sparrow's tails on both ends (see "Two-Loop Bow" on page 52), and hot-glue the bow to the top of the wreath. Then put a dab of hot glue on the ends of the fragile ornamental grass and insert the grass behind the pods and cones.

Made from oriental bittersweet, this wreath seems to glow in the same autumn sunlight that ripens its brilliant orange berries.

Bittersweet Wreath

What You Need

6 to 8 lengths of oriental bittersweet vine, full of berries (they ripen in the fall), 6 feet long

1 wasp nest

2 artificial or dead wasps or other insects

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

What You Do

1 Use six to eight 6-foot lengths of the vine or the equivalent in shorter or longer pieces. It is best to work with the vine as soon as possible after you cut it because it is more pliable then and the berries, which grow only on the female plants, stay on the vine more securely. Don't trim any of the offshoot tendrils because they hold most of the berries and add a lot of texture and interest to the completed wreath.

2 Strip off all the leaves, then twist and intertwine the vine into a 16-inch circle. Start with a single length of vine and add one piece at a time until all of the vine pieces are incorporated. Use the crooked vines to your advantage; don't try to tame them.

3 Hot-glue the wasp nest where it looks most interesting. Hot-glue the wasps or other insects on or near the nest to give your wreath a true nature look—without the bite!

BOWS

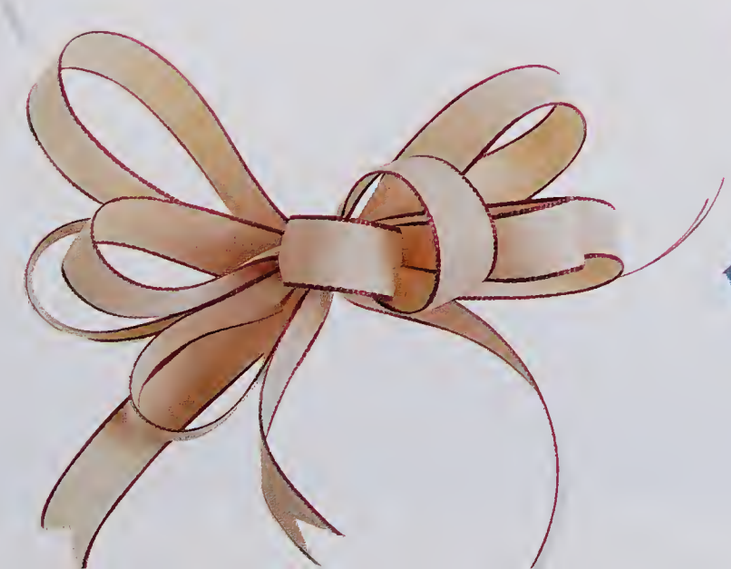
A perfectly placed bow can tie together all the elements of a crafted piece and can give it a special personality. An organdy bow with long ribbon tails can be the main attraction of a wreath, such as the "Victorian Wreath" on page 90. A wired ribbon can be an integral part of the design, as in the "Victorian Twig Swag" on page 204. Or a simple raffia bow can be treated as one more material, as in the "Kitchen Herb Swag" on page 202.

Once you have learned the basics of making a bow, the hard part will be choosing from among the many different types of ribbon that are available. A visit to a well-stocked fabric store, craft-supply store, Christmas shop, or florist will reveal a dazzling array of ribbon. You may be wooed by the cotton tapestry, the sheers in floral prints or metallic gold, or the dressy organdy. The best way to learn about fabric characteristics is to purchase 2 to 3 yards of each ribbon and to practice making bows. In general, you'll want to practice on inexpensive ribbon. But for your projects, try to use high-quality ribbon since it will give your finished piece a much more polished look. The "Bow Options" chart on page 48 lists the main types of ribbon and describes advantages and drawbacks of each.

Attaching Bows

A bow is usually hot-glued or wired to a base, but it can also be wired onto a floral pick and then picked into the base. A long length of ribbon can be secured to the base with straight pins. Some ribbon, such as wired ribbon, can be twisted and curled around the base and then held in place with small dabs of hot glue.

A bow or ribbon can be the first or the last material to be attached. If you are working with fragile, dried flowers, you may want to attach the bow before you attach all your flowers so that you don't disturb them. If you secure the bow early on, you may decide to decorate it with natural materials, too. Be careful not to drip hot glue on the visible part of the ribbon.



BOW OPTIONS

Cellophane

Advantages • Available in a wide range of bright colors; adds holiday spirit to projects; easy to work with.

Drawbacks • Bright, metallic colors have limited design applications.

Cotton

Advantages • Available in a wide range of colors, prints, and widths; good for beginners because creases can be ironed out and ribbon reused; printed ribbons are a great option for matching room decor; inexpensive and good material for practice.

Drawbacks • Fabric can be stiff; takes some practice to make a well-proportioned bow.

Lace

Advantages • Available in several widths; perfect for weddings, births, and other special occasions; for the highest quality appearance, select cotton lace.

Drawbacks • Is not very stiff and the bow loops may not hold their shape very well, but it can be dipped in liquid fabric stiffener before tying the bow.

Paper

Advantages • Available in a wide range of colors and widths; good for beginners; ties easily into simple bows and can be reshaped and reused.

Drawbacks • Bows tend to be casual, not dressy; buy ribbon that comes already unraveled, because twisted paper ribbon, though inexpensive, is time-consuming to unravel.

Raffia

Advantages • Available in different widths; adds a natural touch to projects; is easy to work with; can be easily dyed to match materials and room settings.

Drawbacks • Natural look may limit design applications.

Satin

Advantages • Available in a wide range of colors and widths; can be hot-glued to straw and polystyrene bases to give them a more attractive appearance; inexpensive and good material for practice.

Drawbacks • Fabric is slippery and can be a challenge to crafters just learning to tie bows.

Velvet

Advantages • Available in a wide range of colors and widths; adds a formal and elegant look; works well on a grand scale.

Drawbacks • Has limited design applications because it is so dressy; is easily crushed and not reusable; can be expensive.

Wired (also known as French ribbon)

Advantages • Wrong side is lined with a row of thin-gauge wire on both edges; available in a wide range of colors, including variegated hues, prints, and widths; easy to work with; can be shaped and reshaped again and again.

Drawbacks • Can be expensive.

Nine-Loop Bow

WHAT YOU NEED

3 yards of ribbon

6 inches of thin-gauge floral wire wrapped in floral tape

Scissors

With this one approach, you can make a 5-loop or a 15-loop bow.

WHAT YOU DO

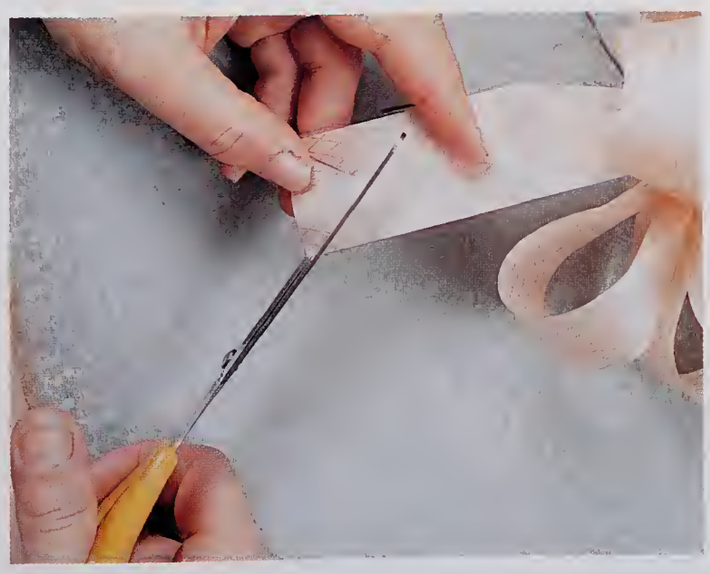
1 Pinch the ribbon between your thumb and index finger, 4½ inches away from the end of the ribbon and twist. Keep the right side of the ribbon facing you at all times.

2 Make a loop two-thirds the length of the streamer or tail (about 2¾ inches), put it behind the tail, pinch, and twist.

3 Make a second loop of the same length as the first, put it behind the tail, pinch it, and twist it so that the right side is again facing you. Repeat this process six more times so that you wind up with four loops on top and four on the bottom. If you want a dome-shaped bow, make loops four through eight each slightly larger than the one before it.

4 For the ninth loop—the center loop—make a loop the size of the first loop, and pinch and twist it so that the right side is facing you. Pull the taped floral wire through the center loop; wrap the wire around the center of all the loops, pull it tight, and twist it. To fluff the bow, tug and twist each loop; you can also fluff the loops by ironing them with a warm curling iron.

5 To finish the bow, cut the other end of the ribbon so that you have a second 4½-inch-long tail. Cut the two tails either on the diagonal or with a V-shaped cut (or sparrow's tail).



Two-Loop Bow

WHAT YOU NEED

2 yards of ribbon

Scissors

WHAT YOU DO

1 Make a 4½-inch center loop, leaving a 1-foot-long tail, and pinch and twist the ribbon, keeping the right side facing you.

2 Wrap a second loop around your hand and twist it gently so that the right side of the ribbon remains facing you.

3 Fold the ribbon to make the third loop and pull it through the center loop; pull the loops until a tight knot is formed.

4 Adjust the loops and the tails and fluff the bow. Cut the other end of the ribbon so you have a second 1-foot-long tail. Cut the two tails either on the diagonal or with a V-shaped cut (or sparrow's tail).

CONES, PODS & NUTS

C

Nothing adds more drama and texture to a nature project than cones, pods, and nuts. While they are not as showy as flowers nor as fragrant as herbs, their distinctive shapes and textures make them handsome additions to any craft project (see "Holiday Wreath" on page 44). Best of all, cones and pods are abundant along roadsides, in fields, and right in your own backyard. Gather them by the bagful and use different types and sizes together in the same project. Or just use one material, such as cones, for beautiful results.

Preparing Cones, Pods, and Nuts For Use

Before using cones, pods, and nuts they must be heated to kill any little creatures (insect eggs or larvae) in residence. This is a simple process. Spread them in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake them in a 200°F oven for 25 minutes, or you can use a microwave oven.

Microwaving offers the additional benefit of opening up the petals of the cones, which will make them easier to wire. To microwave cones, place four or five of them into a paper bag and heat them on 50 percent power for eight to ten minutes. If the cone petals are not as open as you'd like, heat them in three-minute intervals until the petals open.

To prepare pods or nuts for microwaving, place 7 to 12 of them into a brown bag and heat them for eight to ten minutes at 50 percent power to kill any larvae and to open up any contracted pods.

Sections or Parts of Cones

Many times a craft project calls for sections or parts of cones or pods, such as cone flowers—traditional modifications of whole cones. To make a cone flower, simply cut between two layers of petals, using heavy scissors or pruning shears. Most crafters leave four to eight layers of petals on their cone flowers, which can then be wired or glued onto the project.

Some pods are actually more interesting on the inside than the outside. You can use a sharp serrated knife to slice dried pods into crosswise or lengthwise portions. Pods are best sliced before baking, as baking may make them a bit more brittle.

Some of the best cones for projects are listed on page 54. To get cones and pods that are not indigenous to your area of the country, try ordering them from some of the sources listed in the "Supply Sources" on page 254. If you plan on collecting cones, pods, and nuts yourself, remember to gather them after they are fully mature but before they have begun to rot.

How to Attach Cones, Pods, and Nuts

You can attach these items in a number of ways. Small cones, pods, and nuts can simply be hot-glued onto a base. If the base is polystyrene, use cool-melt glue so that you don't melt it. If you plan to hot-glue cones, pods, and nuts to a flat surface, such as a piece of wood, first cover the surface with a sturdy fabric, like cotton muslin; then you can hot-glue your materials to the fabric.

You can attach cones by wiring them as follows: Slip a length of fine-gauge floral wire around the bottom of the cone between two layers of cone petals and fold the wire in half. Twist the wire ends together until they are tightly woven right up against the bottom of the cone. Wrap this wire around the wreath base or through a grapevine strand—or around whatever you are attaching the cone to—and twist again (see Figure 1). Extremely heavy cones may need to be reinforced with several dabs of hot glue. If the cone is small and fragile, you can simply loop the end of the wire around the bottom of the cone and leave a single long wire stem to wrap around or insert into the base (see Figure 2). For some projects, such as the "S-Curve Cone Centerpiece" on page 55, you will need to drill through the stem end of a cone, pod, or nut with a ⅛-inch drill bit and slip the wire through the hole.

Small seedpods and seed heads can also be attached to bases with floral picks. Hot-glue the flat end of the pick to the material and then insert the tapered end into the base.

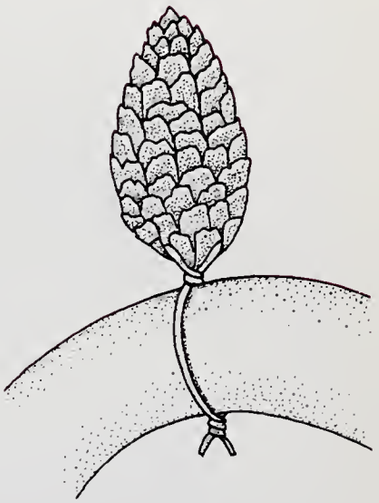


Figure 1

Figure 2

Cones for Craft Projects

- Arborvitae
- Australian pine
- Blue spruce
- Cedar
- Cypress
- Fir
- Hemlock
- Juniper
- Longleaf pine
- Norway spruce
- Pinyon pine
- Red pine
- Redwood
- Scotch pine
- Sequoia
- Sugar pine
- Virginia pine
- White pine
- White spruce

Pods for Craft Projects

- Badam fruit
- Begun fruit
- Daylily
- Eucalyptus
- Hare's-tail grass
- Honey locust
- Jack fruit
- Lotus
- Magnolia
- Milkweed
- Palm
- Poppy
- Pussy willow
- Scotch broom
- Sweet gum
- Teasel
- Wisteria
- Yucca

Nuts for Crafts Projects

- Acorn
- Chestnut
- Hazelnut
- Hickory nut
- Pecan
- Walnut

To give nuts a dressier look, spray paint them gold. For a gold-dusting effect, stand about 2 feet away from the nuts and spray them with short, quick bursts of paint, moving your hand constantly to give an even dusting. You can use this dusting technique on cones and pods, too, (see "Woodland Fireplace Screen" on page 56).

To create a fruitlike appearance, spray the nuts with red paint; when dry, spray them with a high-gloss acrylic. Or, before applying the layer of gloss, stand back 2 feet and spray the nuts very lightly with black paint: this will give them a cherry-red color.

This fanciful curved centerpiece is the perfect complement to any holiday dinner or special occasion.

S-Curve Cone Centerpiece

What You Need

24 petals from longleaf pinecones

4 large longleaf pinecones

8 red-spruce cones

28 inches of heavy-gauge wire

Brown floral tape

Electric drill with ⅛-inch drill bit

32 pieces of medium-gauge wire, 6 inches long

4 pieces of medium-gauge wire, 9 inches long

Wire cutters

Clear varnish spray

2 votive candles (optional)

What You Do

1 Twist the heavy-gauge wire into an S shape and completely wrap it with brown floral tape.

2 Drill small holes in the bases of the 24 petals from the longleaf pinecones.

3 Wrap twenty-four 6-inch-long pieces of medium-gauge wire with brown floral tape. Thread one wire through each petal and twist, leaving about a 4-inch length for a stem.

4 Wrap the four pieces of 9-inch-long medium-gauge wire with brown floral tape. Cut the four longleaf pinecones to make flowers (see "Sections or Parts of Cones" on page 53). Wrap the wire around the bottom petals and twist. Leave about 5 inches of wire for a stem.

5 Wrap each of the remaining 6-inch-long medium-gauge wire pieces with brown floral tape and wrap each piece around a red-spruce cone as in Step 4 on page 55, leaving a 4-inch stem.

6 Using the wire stems to attach the cones, place the large cone flowers onto the S shape, following the photograph on page 55. In the same manner, attach the red-spruce cones and cone petals.

7 Rewrap the entire S-shaped base with brown floral tape until all the wires are covered and smooth. Spray the entire centerpiece with clear varnish and allow it to dry. Add votive candles to match your decor, if desired.

Woodland Fireplace Screen

WHAT YOU NEED

500 to 600 cones and pods of assorted types and sizes

100 acorns, chestnuts, locust burrs, peach pits, and other interesting hulls and nuts

20 clusters of dried pepperberries or dried flowers

Jigsaw with a plywood blade

1 piece of plywood, ¼ inch thick, large enough to fit the dimensions of your fireplace opening (The screen shown in the photo on the opposite page measures 24 × 36 inches.)

Yardstick

Pencil

36 inches of string or flexible tubing

3 large shelf brackets and accompanying screws

Electric drill with bit size one size smaller than the screws for the shelf brackets

Screwdriver

3 yards of cotton muslin

Scissors

Hammer

Small tacks

Pruning shears

White craft glue

Clear varnish spray

Metallic gold spray paint (optional)

WHAT YOU DO

1 Using the jigsaw, cut the plywood to size. Use the pencil and yardstick to measure and mark the dimensions on the wood. Use the pencil and the string or the flexible tubing to outline a nice arc connecting your dimensions. When you are satisfied with the arc, draw it in pencil and cut out the fan-shaped screen with a jigsaw.

2 To attach the shelf brackets, drill holes in the bottom of the wood on the back of the fan, making sure not to drill all the way through the wood. Then, place the brackets on the wood, aligning the holes for the screws with the holes in the wood. Use the screwdriver to screw the brackets to the wood. If you attach the brackets at this stage, you will be completing Steps 4 through 7 with the fan in an upright position. You can choose to add the brackets after completing Step 7; to do so, ask a friend to hold the screen upright while you attach the brackets.

3 Because the pinecones will not adhere well to the smooth surface of the plywood, you need to cover the plywood with fabric. Using the scissors, cut the muslin to fit the front of the fan, stretch it tightly, and tack it securely to the back side of the wood. Cut off any excess fabric. On the front side of the fan, randomly hammer tacks into the wood, peppering the fabric with tacks so it will not be able to pull away from the wood.

Ideal for camouflaging unsightly ashes and charred logs, this impressive fireplace screen is a great way to make use of all those cones, pods, and nuts you collect on your walks through the woods.

4 You are now ready to glue on the natural materials. Assess your collection of cones. You may want to cut some of the very tall cones to create cone flowers (see "Sections or Parts of Cones" on page 53). Before you start to glue, here are a few design guidelines to help you. (a) Glue the largest pinecones in the middle of the fan; this placement should not be symmetrical but should appear random. (b) Because the appeal of this project depends on the texture created by the cones, it is a good practice to vary their height by placing short cones near taller ones. This does not mean you should glue a 1-inch hemlock cone next to a 1 foot sugar-pine cone, but rather that you can place a 4- to 5-inch Douglas-fir cone next to a 9-inch longleaf pinecone. (c) Always work the height of the cones up and down slightly. (d) The more varieties of cones you have to work with, the better!

5 When you have completely covered the fan with cones, it is time to look for holes in your design. If you can see the fabric, glue on a peach pit or acorn to provide coverage and add visual interest. Take your time; a large fan will take a minimum of five to six hours to completely cover with materials. Make sure all the edges of the design area are covered with stable cones that are not likely to break.

6 Take your fan outdoors. Spray first with a clear varnish and let dry (this will take about two hours). If you want to gild your fan, spray it now with the metallic gold paint. If you don't want a heavy layer of gold, stand about 2 feet away from the fan, and spray in short, quick puffs of paint, constantly moving the can around the fan. This technique will give the appearance of gold dusting and will permit some of the natural tones of the cones to show through. If you are unsure how to achieve this effect, practice on a piece of newspaper first.

7 Finish the fan by gluing on the color accents, in this case, red pepperberries. These accents should match your decor, and may be as simple as dried statice. Just a few sprigs of flowers or a cluster of berries tucked here and there is enough to pick up the colors in a room. If the fan needs cleaning, use a vacuum cleaner; after a few years, you may want to respray it with varnish. Store the fan away from excessive heat.

Nut, Pod & Berry Wreath

Pepperberries and gold cording add a hint of glamour to this delightful and nutty mix of natural materials.

What You Need

12 dried Siberian iris pods

50 hazelnuts

20 Brazil nuts

4 almonds

2 pecans

1 piece of sheet moss, 15 inches square (available at craft-supply and hobby stores)

15 sprigs of dried pink pepperberries

10-inch-diameter polystyrene wreath base

6 inches of heavy-gauge floral wire

Gold acrylic spray paint

Cool-melt glue gun and glue sticks

Pencil

15 inches of braided cording

What You Do

1 With the heavy-gauge wire, fashion a hanger (see "Hangers" on page 118) and attach it to the polystyrene wreath base. Spray the iris pods gold and set them aside to dry.

2 Cool-glue all of the nuts onto the polystyrene base, generously covering the front of the wreath, with a smaller number on the inner and outer rims. Cool-glue some nuts on top of other nuts. Vary the angles of the nuts to create a pleasing arrangement.

3 Squirt a small amount of cool-melt glue into the spaces between the nuts. With a pencil, poke little bits of sheet moss onto the glue. When all the gaps are filled with moss, cool-glue larger pieces of moss to completely cover the rest of the base, including the inner and outer rims and the back.

4 Cool-glue the sprigs of pepperberries all over the wreath. Then cool-glue the gold iris pods on the inner and outer rims of the wreath.

5 Cool-glue the cording to the left-hand side of the wreath, being sure to fasten it at all the places where it loops and curves.

Intricate but simple-to-make hemlock spheres look natural and attractive hanging on a Christmas tree or in a doorway.

Hemlock Kissing Balls

WHAT YOU NEED (for each ball)

30 hemlock cones, gathered as soon as possible after they mature

1-inch-diameter polystyrene ball

Black shoe polish

30 pieces of fine-gauge wire, 5 inches long

Wire cutters

White glue

6 inches of medium-gauge wire

Clear varnish spray

WHAT YOU DO

1 Cover the polystyrene ball with black shoe polish and allow it to dry.

2 Using the 5-inch lengths of fine-gauge wire, wrap the bottom petals of each hemlock cone with a piece of wire, twist the ends together, and snip the wire with the wire cutters to leave a ¾-inch-long stem.

3 Dip the ends of the wire stems into white glue and stick the wired cones into the polystyrene ball. Cover the entire ball with cones. Allow the glue to dry.

4 Spray the ball with clear acrylic varnish and allow it to dry. Attach the medium-gauge wire for a hanger (see "Hangers" on page 118).

CORNHUSKS

Cornhusk crafting surely must be the quintessential nature craft—humble in origin, centuries old, and downright fun to learn.

Most craft-supply stores sell dried cornhusks in 4-ounce packages, but you'll also find fresh husks right on the sweet corn in your local grocery store and, if you live in a rural area, on the corn in the fields. To cure your own green husks, strip them gently from the ears of corn and spread them out on newspapers to dry.

The dried husks are brittle, so before you can work with them you'll need to soak them for about 15 minutes in a bucket or pan filled with hot water. If you have trouble separating tightly bundled commercial husks, place the entire bundle in warm water until the husks are soft enough to peel apart. Once they're wet, the husks can be kept in the refrigerator for up to two weeks and can be frozen indefinitely. To keep the husks damp as you work, wrap them in a moistened towel.

Both natural-colored and dyed husks are available at craft-supply stores, but if you'd like to extend your color choices, you can do your own dyeing. Just mix fabric dye according to the instructions on the dye package and soak the husks in the dye bath until they're the desired shade. (An overnight soaking may be necessary for deep shades.) One tip: When you work with dyed husks, be sure they're damp rather than dripping wet, or the dye may bleed.

Note that cornhusks are textured, with a grain that runs along their length. Always cut and roll the husks so that the grain runs from one end of the piece you are making to the other.

To make the projects that follow, soak your cornhusks and assemble your materials before you start.

Decorative cornhusk dolls only look complicated. Follow the instructions for the "Basic Cornhusk Doll" on page 62 to create one of the attractive medium-size dolls shown here.

Basic Cornhusk Doll

What You Need

- 2 ounces of natural-colored cornhusks
- ½ ounce of green-colored cornhusks
- ½ ounce of red-colored cornhusks
- 1 tuft of dried corn silk, about ½ × ¾ × 4 inches
- 2 or 3 tiny sprigs of dried blooms
- 3 inches of heavy-gauge floral wire
- Scissors
- 1-inch-diameter, rigid polystyrene ball
- 8 pieces of fine-gauge floral wire, 4 inches long
- 8 inches of medium-gauge floral wire
- Wire cutters
- 2 or 3 sheets of white paper
- White craft glue
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

What You Do

1 Bend over ½ inch of the 3-inch-long heavy-gauge wire to form a small hook. Cut a 2 × 4-inch piece of the natural-colored cornhusk, gather it in the center, and catch the gather in the wire hook. Push the other end of the wire through the center of the polystyrene ball and pull the wire all the way through the ball, until the hook is seated firmly in the upper portion of the ball (see Figure 1). Spread the husk to cover the ball and twist a piece of the fine-gauge wire around the husk, just beneath the head you've created (see Figure 2). Use the wire cutters to trim the ends of the wire.

2 To make the arms, place the 8-inch-long piece of medium-gauge wire on one long edge of an 8-inch-long piece of natural-colored cornhusk and roll the husk tightly around the wire to form a cylinder. Tie the center of the cylinder with a piece of the fine-gauge wire and trim the cylinder ends to make a 7½-inch-long arm piece (see Figure 3).

3 To make the sleeves that cover each arm, gather a 3 × 3½-inch piece of husk around one arm, about ½ inch from its end, and twist a piece of the fine-gauge wire around it to fasten it in place. Then turn this husk inside out, folding it back toward the center of the cylinder. Use a piece of fine-gauge wire to tie down the folded sleeve near the center of the arm piece (see Figure 4). Repeat this process to form another sleeve at the other end of the cylinder.

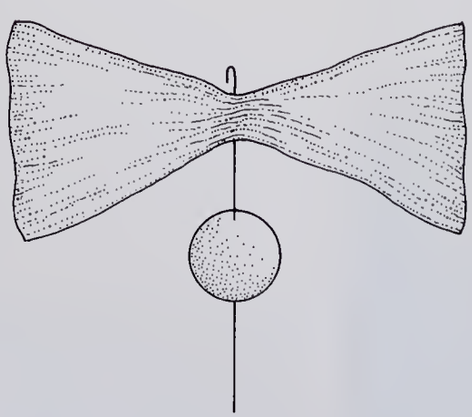


Figure 1

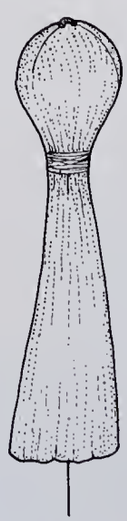


Figure 2

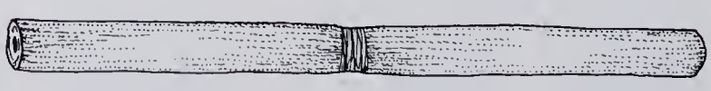


Figure 3

Figure 4

4 Position the arm piece underneath the head and between the pieces of husk that form the neck. Place a piece of the fine-gauge wire underneath the arm piece and tie the arm piece in place (see Figure 5). Cut two pieces of the natural-colored husk for the bodice, each about 1½ × 5 inches. Hide the long, raw edges of each piece by folding them toward the center of each piece. Place the center of each strip on a shoulder and bring the ends down the front and back, crossing them at the waist (see Figure 6).

5 To make the apron straps that rest over the bodice, start with two ¾ × 5-inch strips of the green husk, folding them to hide any raw edges. Drape these over the shoulders. Then twist a piece of the fine-gauge wire around the waist to secure the bodice and straps to the torso.

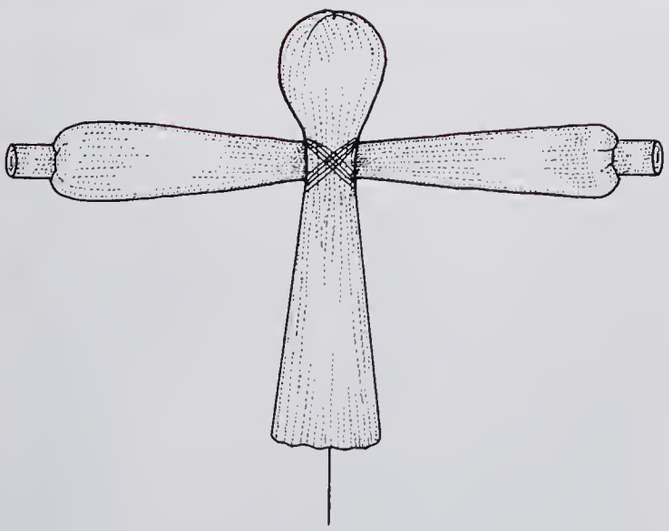


Figure 5

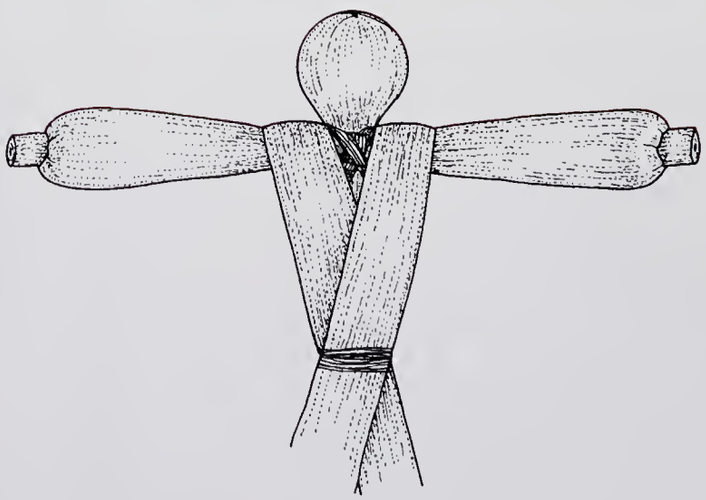


Figure 6

6 To make the skirt, bend the arms up out of your way. Place four to six of the nicest-looking green husks evenly around the chest and head, gathering them into soft folds as you work and overlapping the waist wire by about ½ inch. (Note that the photo shows a skirt being made with natural-colored husks; you may use husks of any color.) Wrap a piece of the fine-gauge wire tightly around the doll's waist.

7 Gently fold the husks down into position, shaping them as you turn them right side out (see Figure 7 on the opposite page). Trim the bottom of the skirt to make it even. To make the apron, cut a piece of the red husk about 1 inch longer than the skirt. Use a small strip of red husk—or natural-colored husk, if you prefer—to tie the apron piece around the waist so that its bottom edge is slightly above the bottom of the skirt.

Pilgrim Doll

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Substitute 1 ounce of black-colored cornhusks for the red and the green cornhusks in the "Basic Cornhusk Doll" on page 62.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Following the instructions for the "Basic Cornhusk Doll," use the natural-colored husks to make the arms, head, hat, and apron. Use black husks for the sleeves, bodice, and skirt. (Omit the apron straps.)

2 Cut a thin piece of the natural-colored husk to form a collar around the doll's neck. Trim the collar as needed and hot-glue it to her shoulders, front, and back.

8 While the arms are still damp, reposition them as desired. Stuff the skirts with white paper so that they'll hold their shape as they dry. Allow the doll to dry for about three days.

9 When the doll is completely dry, cover the top and back of the head with white craft glue and wrap it with the corn silk. Be sure to trim away those split ends! To make the hat, first cut a 5-inch square of the red husk. Fold one edge over about ½ inch to form a smooth front edge. Hot-glue the hat to the top of the doll's head. Then pinch the back portion of the hat into a fold behind the back of her head and apply hot glue to secure (see Figure 8). Tie a thin piece of the red husk around the doll's neck, making a bow under her chin.

10 Hot-glue the tiny sprigs of dried blooms to one of the doll's hands.

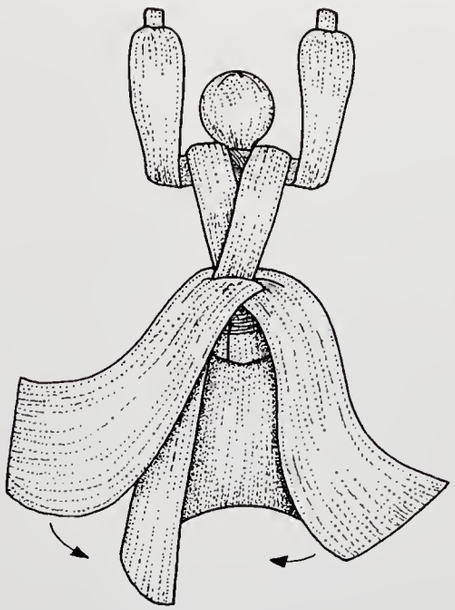


Figure 7

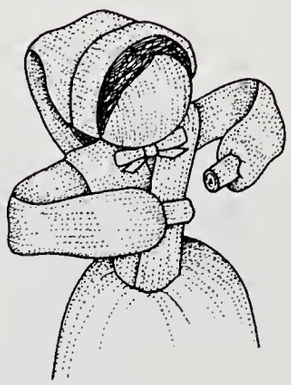


Figure 8

Broom

To make a broom for any cornhusk doll, wrap a 1½ × 3-inch piece of natural-colored husk around a craft pick, using a short length of heavy thread to tie it in place. Then tie the pick to the doll's hand with a short length of string.

Cornhusk Santa

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Red fabric dye

Substitute 3 ounces of natural-colored cornhusks for all of the husks in the "Basic Cornhusk Doll" on page 62

White fleece fabric

4 inches of fine-gauge floral wire

Straight pin

WHAT YOU DO

1 Following the instructions on the dye package, prepare the dye double strength. Soak about three-fourths of the husks in the bath until they're the desired shade of red. Leave the remaining husks undyed.

2 Assemble the "Basic Cornhusk Doll" but use red husks to make all of the parts, except for the natural-colored head and arms. (Don't make the hat yet.)

3 When the doll is completely dry, glue small pieces of the white fleece onto Santa's skirt and around the ends of his sleeves, as shown in the photograph.

4 To make the beard-and-hair piece, gather two 9-inch-long pieces of natural-colored husk in the center and wrap them with the piece of fine-gauge wire. Using the straight pin, shred the cornhusks on one side of the wire to form the beard. Secure the beard-and-hair piece to the top of the head by wrapping and hot-gluing the unshredded section around the head to form hair.

5 Shred a 2-inch-long piece of natural-colored husk to make Santa's moustache and hot-glue it to the beard.

6 To make the hat, which is longer than the hat on the basic cornhusk doll, use a 5-inch-square piece of red husk. Turn one 5-inch edge of the husk back on itself to form a smooth front edge and hot-glue the hat to the head. When the glue is dry, hot-glue a fold into the flowing back portion of the hat (see Figure 8 on page 65).

7 Roll a 1½-inch square of red husk into a loose tube to form Santa's list. Tie it with a small strand of husk and hot-glue it to Santa's hand, just below his fleece cuff.

Cornhusk Bookmarks

WHAT YOU NEED (for 1 bookmark)

½ ounce of natural-colored cornhusks

½ ounce of dyed cornhusks, any color

1 tuft of dried corn silk, 2 inches long

Scissors

No. 20 crochet thread

White craft glue

Old magazine or catalog

Heavy object, such as a large book

Fine-tipped colored pens

WHAT YOU DO

1 Cut a 1½ × 3-inch strip of natural-colored husk and fold it in half to make a square. Then fold the folded edge down about ½ inch. Starting at one short edge, roll the folded husk into a tube, with the fold on the outer surface (see Figure 1 on page 68). The thicker portion will serve as the head of the bookmark, and the thinner portion will form the neck. Use the crochet thread to tie the roll together just below the head.

2 Cut a 1 × 4½-inch strip of natural-colored husk. Drape the strip over the head, with about 3½ inches of husk covering the face and about 1 inch behind the head. Spread the front of this husk to cover the front of the head and fasten it by tying thread around the neck (see Figure 2 on page 68). Split the front portion of the husk into two long strips, stopping the split just under the tie at the neck.

3 To form the arms, twist each strip into a very tight roll and then double each roll back on itself to form a 1-inch-long arm; about ½ inch of roll will be left at the end (see Figure 3 on page 68). Press the ½-inch portion of each arm down the back of the torso and use the thread to fasten them below the neck.

4 Wrapping the arms with dyed husk is easier than it looks; it's done bandage style. Cut a ⅝ × 4¾-inch strip of husk. Place one end at an angle across the front of the torso piece. While holding that end in place, bring the husk up and over one shoulder and wrap it around the arm two or three times, leaving ⅛ inch of exposed arm to represent a hand. Draw the husk around the back of the torso, under the other arm,

You'll never lose your place when it's held by a charming cornhusk bookmark.

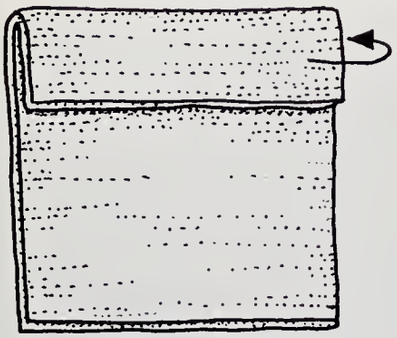


Figure 1

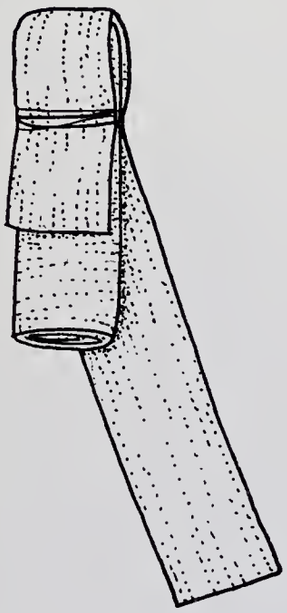


Figure 2

and wrap the other arm in the same manner. Finally, bring the loose end of the husk straight down the torso's back (see Figure 4). Then secure both husk ends—one in front and one in back—by tying a piece of the thread around the waist.

5 To make the skirt, start with a 4 × 7-inch dyed husk. At one end of the husk, cut two ½-inch-deep slits, each about ½ inch in from the long edges. Lay the torso face down on the strip, lining up its neck with the edge between the slits. Slip the arms through the slits (see Figure 5) and pull the husk back to overlap behind the neck. Tie the dress together, first with thread and then with ⅛-inch-wide strips of husk, at the waist and at the neck, trimming the ends at each knot.

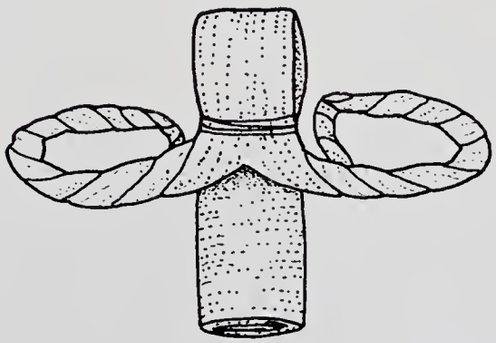


Figure 3

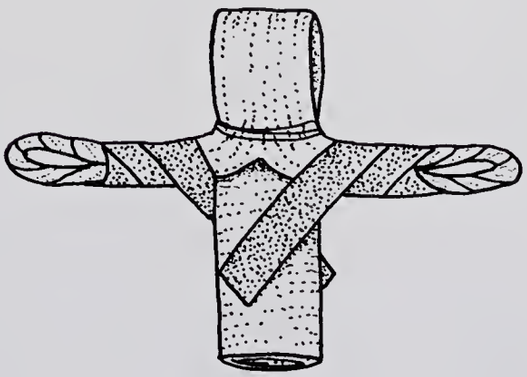


Figure 4

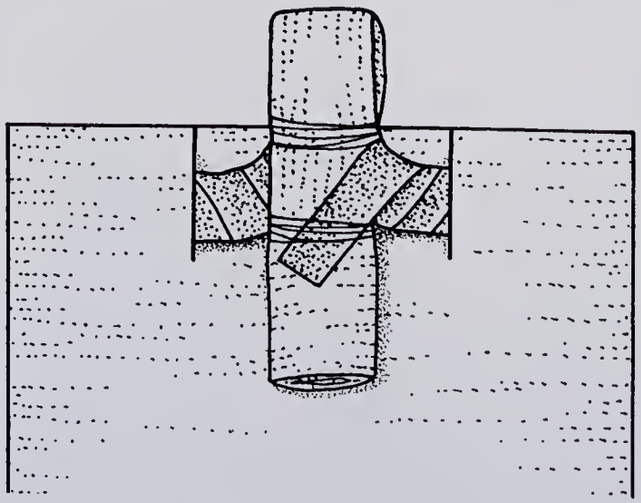


Figure 5

6 To make the hair, drape a 2-inch-long bundle of corn silk over the head so that one end covers the face and the other spreads down the back. About ⅛ inch down from the top of the head, tie a piece of the thread around the hair and head to fasten the hair in place. Then pull the silk that rests in front over the head to cover the thread (see Figure 6). Braid or twist the silks, using a tiny amount of craft glue to keep them from unraveling. Tie the braid at its base, first with the thread and then with a narrow piece of husk.

7 To press the skirt flat as the bookmark dries, slip it inside an old magazine or catalog and place a heavy object on top. (Be careful not to use printed matter that will release dyes or inks onto the damp cornhusks.)

8 When the bookmark has dried completely, use colored pens to draw on the face.

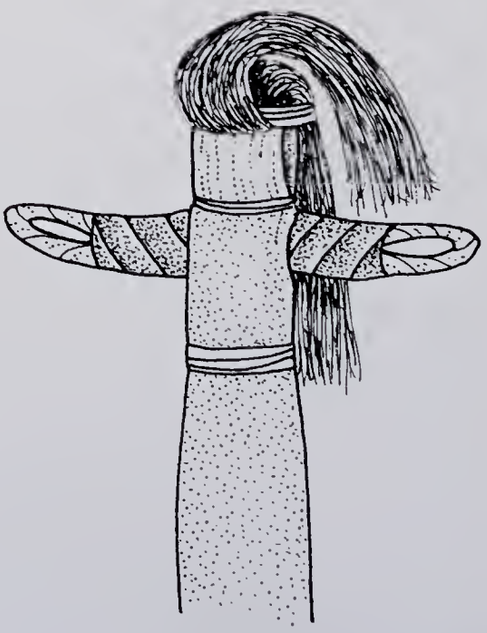


Figure 6

Who says that you can't create nature crafts if you live in the city? A quick trip to your local grocery store and craft shop will yield all you need to bring spring blossoms into your home.

Cornhusk Dogwoods

What You Need (for 1 flower)

- 1 or 2 natural-colored cornhusks
- 1 light green-colored cornhusk
- Tracing paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- 18 inches of heavy-gauge floral wire
- 4½ inches of medium-gauge floral wire
- 11 inches of medium-gauge floral wire
- Wire cutters
- Straight pin
- Pliers
- 3 inches of masking tape
- Green floral tape
- Light red or pink fingernail polish

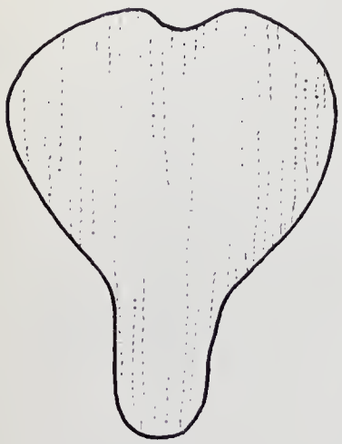


Figure 1

WHAT YOU DO

1 Rest the natural-colored husk flat on your work surface. Using the pencil, trace the petal pattern (see Figure 1) and cut it out. Trace and cut four petals from the natural-colored husk.

2 Make a small loop at the end of the heavy-gauge wire (see Figure 2). The loop will prevent the finished flower from slipping off the end of the wire.

3 Cut a 2 × 3-inch piece of the green husk and fold over ½ inch of one short end. Place the looped end of the wire on the fold (see Figure 3), and fold the husk over the loop (see Figure 4). Then roll the husk tightly around the wire.

Figure 2

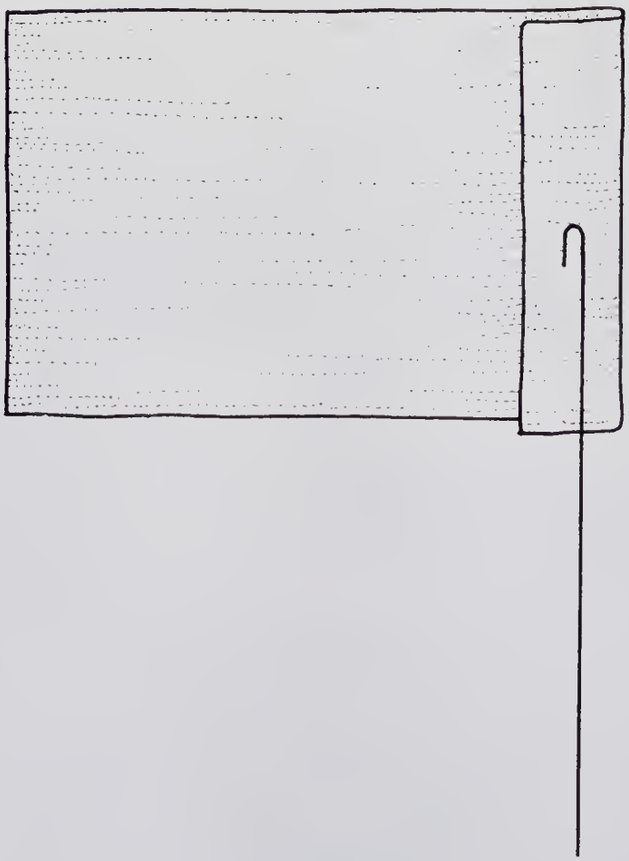


Figure 3

4 Cut two or three pieces of green husk, each about 4½ inches long and 1 inch wide, and set the pieces on top of each other. Then roll them around the husk-covered loop and fasten them in place just below the loop with the 4½-inch length of wire. Twist the wire to secure the husks, trim the wire ends to ½ inch in length, and press the trimmed wires down against the rolled husk. Shred the husks above the wire with a straight pin (see Figure 5).

5 Place two of the petals opposite each other, with the tongue of each petal pressed against the lower edge of the rolled husk. To secure the two petals in place, wrap them with 5 inches of the 11-inch piece of wire (see Figure 6).

6 Press the remaining two petals in place and wind the remaining 6-inch length of wire around them. Using the pliers, twist the two ends of the wire together, trim to ½ inch in length, and bend the trimmed wire down flat.

7 Disguise the visible wire and its twisted ends by wrapping it, first with a 3-inch piece of masking tape and then with green floral tape (see Figure 7). Continue winding the floral tape all the way down the wire stem to cover it completely.

8 Place the stem in an upright container and, as the flower petals dry, smooth and shape them with your fingers.

9 After the petals dry, paint the indentation on the outer edge of each petal with a tiny dab of pink or light red fingernail polish.

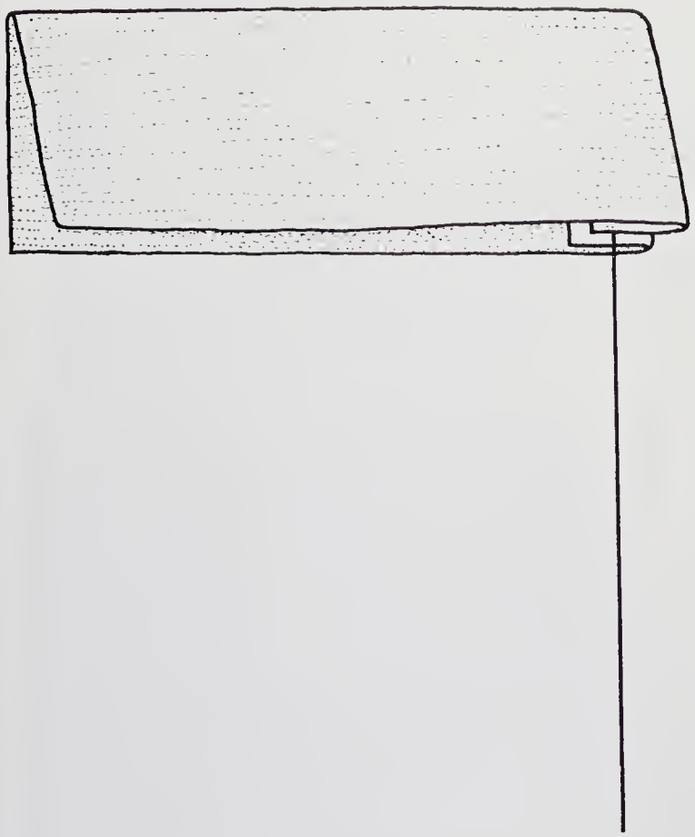


Figure 4

Figure 5

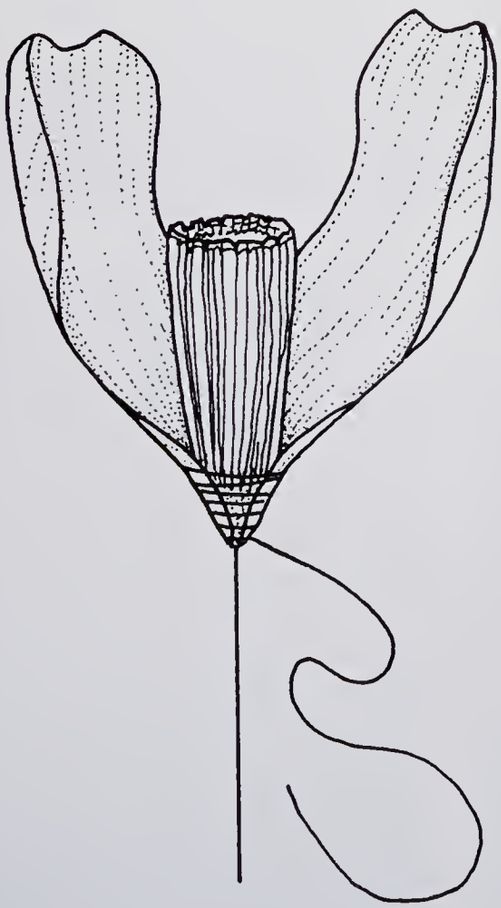


Figure 6

Figure 7

D DRYING

Working with fresh-cut floral materials is wonderfully satisfying. But unless you're a florist or live in the tropics, you'll find that dried materials offer at least two advantages over fresh-cut: They last indefinitely, and they are available year-round. Many dried materials, including everlastings, fruits, herbs, and flowers, are available from craft-supply stores, florists, and mail-order companies, which often sell standard dried blooms in bunches of bundled stems. (See "Supply Sources" on page 254.)

While commercially dried materials are readily available, they are somewhat limited in range and can be quite expensive. Fortunately, drying your own plant materials at home is remarkably easy. Even those of you who don't own gardens will find that a brief trip to the grocery store or a midsummer stroll along your favorite country lane will yield hundreds of suitable plant materials.

Perhaps the single disadvantage to drying your own floral materials is that it can be addictive. Every corner of your home will soon be filled with bundles of fragrant, colorful plants, so give your family fair warning!

Expectations and Reality

Novice crafters may be disappointed by the results of their first experiments with drying. For the sake of your spirits, keep in mind that bloom and foliage colors often change as plants lose moisture; don't expect dried materials to be the same colors as fresh ones. Unless you're working with true everlastings, such as strawflowers, you'll quickly realize that the palette offered by dried materials will take a bit of experience to determine in advance. White blooms, for example, often fade to an off-white or beige color, and the stunning deep reds of some roses may change to equally attractive but very different red-blacks.

Remember, too, that no matter which drying method you use or how careful you are, many factors—some more controllable than others—will come into play, among them the humidity of your environment, the stage at which the materials are harvested, and the varieties of flowers or herbs that you are drying. We certainly don't mean to dampen your enthusiasm, but even experienced nature crafters know that although drying plant materials is tremendously rewarding, the results aren't always consistent.

To ease the learning process, keep a notebook and record in it the results of every foray you make into the world of drying. As you accumulate information in that notebook, by all means use it to adapt the general instructions provided in this chapter. The "Plants for Drying" chart on page 80 should also help you move toward expertise!

Harvesting

Whether you're working in your own garden or plan to collect wild plant materials, take along a large basket and sharp pruning shears. Protect your hands by wearing gloves and your skin by wearing sunblock lotion and a wide-brimmed hat. Always pick fresh plant materials on a warm, sunny day after the morning dew has evaporated; plants that are moist when harvested are likely to develop molds as they dry, and the blooms may turn brown as well. Avoid late-afternoon harvesting, however, as the hot sun may cause blooms to wilt.

Select only the healthiest plants; blemishes on leaves and blooms will only be accentuated by drying. To harvest seed heads and blooms, cut the stems between 2 and 12 inches long (the longer, the better). Because many materials shrink as they dry—some by more than 50 percent—collect more than you think you'll need. Place the cut materials in your basket, alternating the direction in which you set the blossom ends so that the petals and the leaves won't be crushed. Plan on dry-

Dried flowers and herbs seem to arrange themselves when you place them in a pretty basket.

ing your harvest as soon as possible. The longer you wait, the less pleasing the results will be.

If you're harvesting materials from the wild, pay close attention to two firm rules: Know what you're harvesting so that you can avoid collecting endangered species and never take more than one-third of any type of plant. The patch of wild grasses that you pass on your daily walks may call out to the craft designer in you, but if you harvest every blade, you'll cheat nature—and yourself—of a new crop. In addition, please be considerate of others' property and do not go foraging on private land without the owners' permission. And keep in mind that most state and national parks have strict rules regarding harvesting of plant materials, so be sure to check before you find yourself facing stiff fines.

Air Drying

The least-expensive and simplest way to dry many plants is to expose them to warm, dry, slowly circulating air. Because bright plant colors tend to fade when they're placed in direct sunlight, air drying should take place in an area that is also relatively dark: an attic, an uncluttered garage or outbuilding, or even an airy guest bedroom with closed curtains. Adequate ventilation is a must. Basements with poor air circulation just won't do because their damp, cool conditions foster molds and mildew.

Your attic is the perfect place to air-dry herbs. These bunches have been fastened with rubber bands and hooked through hanging loops of string.

As a rule of thumb, air drying works best with materials that tend to hold their shapes when they dry naturally: grasses, seed heads, and cones, for example. Stems that bear spikes of flowers also take well to air drying when gathered in small clusters, but large blooms with many petals may fare less well.

Hanging

The most convenient method of air drying plants is to suspend them upside down by their bundled stems. There are dozens of ways to do this, from hammering nails into exposed attic beams to constructing a series of crossbars in an empty room or shed. Many drying enthusiasts set up a special, horizontal support system by inserting two eye hooks, one into each of two opposite walls, and stringing a taut rope, wire, or chain between them. (Be sure the hooks pierce the wooden joists behind the walls, or your system may collapse, taking chunks of your walls along with it!) Chains work especially well because bunches of materials hooked into the individual links will stay in one place instead of sliding together as they tend to do on wires. You also may want to hang the bundles throughout your home; they'll shed a bit, but they're always attractive and often fragrant, too.

To assemble plant bunches for drying, strip the lowest leaves from the stems and cut the stems to even lengths. Using a tightly twisted rubber band, bind five to ten stems together, 1 or 2 inches from the cut ends. (Avoid combining different types of plants in a single bunch; they may dry at different rates.) Next, unbend a paper clip to form a hook. Slip one end of the hook through the rubber band and the other onto the rope, wire, or chain, leaving space between each bundle (see Figure 1 on the opposite page). Don't be tempted to substitute string or wire for the rubber bands. As the stems dry, they will shrink, and wire or string (unlike rubber bands) won't shrink with them.

Allow the plant materials to dry, checking on them every day or two until the petals or foliage feel papery and rigid or until the stems snap apart when bent. If you see signs of mildew or insect damage, remove and destroy the affected plants immediately. Depending on the types of materials you're drying, the size of the bundles, and the humidity in the environment, drying can take from four days to several weeks.

Remove and store the bundles as soon as they're dry, or they'll become so fragile that you won't be able to work with them. Place the bunches in paper bags or cardboard boxes with lids and keep these containers in a cool, moisture-free location.

Air Drying in Containers

Another air-drying technique, more suitable for long-stemmed weeds, grasses, and seedpods, consists of placing the materials upright in empty containers. Choose a sturdy vase or any container with an opening large enough to allow good air circulation around the stems and seed heads. Cut the stems to varying lengths so that the blooms won't touch one another (see Figure 2). Place the stems loosely in the container and set the container in a warm, dry, dark area.

Everlastings and blooms with very lightweight petals may also be dried by placing them in containers with a small amount of water. You'll enjoy their fresh-cut appearance as the water slowly evaporates, and after it has, the flowers may be left in the container to dry.

Air Drying on Screens

A variation of air drying, this technique is best suited for flowers with especially fragile stems or with large heads that collapse inward when they're suspended upside down. Recycled window screens work well, but if you don't have any, don't despair. Making your own screens takes only an hour or two, a few scraps of lumber, a hammer, some nails, a staple gun, and some ¼-inch hardware cloth purchased from your local hardware store. Nail the lumber together to form a square or rectangular frame and then staple the screen to the frame (see Figure 3).

Position the screen parallel to the ground and at least one foot above the ground in any shaded, warm, dry location. To dry foliage, simply spread the leaves on the screen. When working with blooms, punch small holes in the screen, strip the leaves from the stems, and insert the stems all the

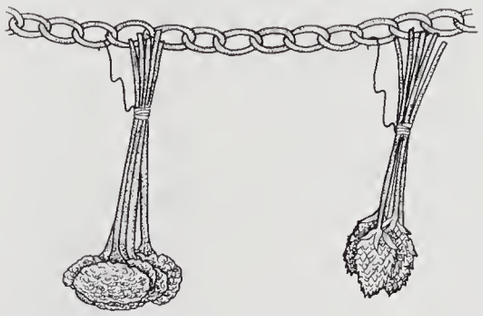


Figure 1

Figure 2

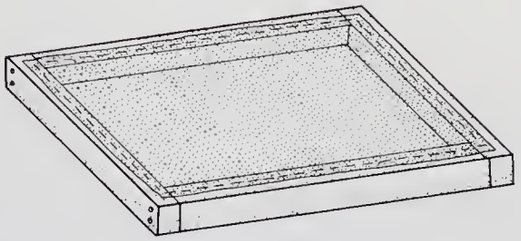


Figure 3

Don't throw away that old clothes-drying rack—recycle it into the perfect support system for bundled, short-stemmed plants.

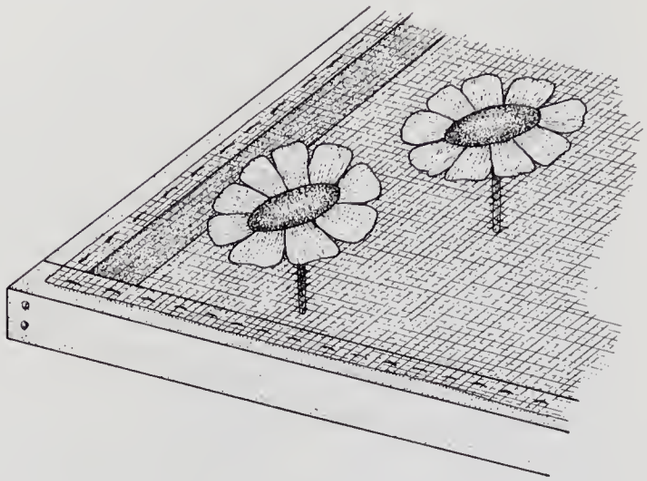


Figure 4

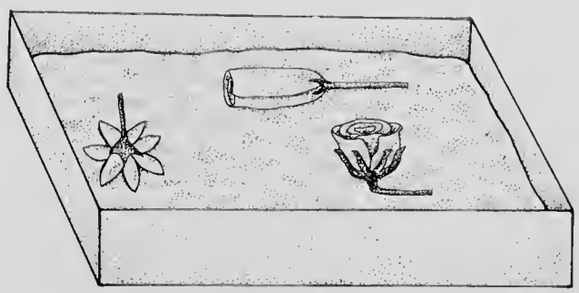


Figure 5

way through the holes until the back of each flower head is supported by the screen (see Figure 4). You also can cut off the stems and spread the blooms in a single layer on top of the screen, but turn the blooms over frequently to prevent the petals from curling excessively. Whichever screen-drying method you choose, be sure to leave plenty of space between the blooms; they shouldn't touch one another. Drying times will vary, but in many situations, 5 to 15 days will be adequate.

Screen-dried flowers without stems are perfect for hot-gluing into arrangements. In fact, even if you plan to dry bunches by suspending them from their stems, you may want to use the screen-drying method to accumulate an assortment of blooms just for this purpose.

Weak stems may also be reinforced before the flower is dried. Cut the stem off to ½ inch below the flower. Then insert a piece of medium-gauge floral wire up through the remaining stem and on through the center of the flower. Bend a small hook into the upper end of the wire and pull the wire back into the flower until the hook is buried. Secure the wire to the short stem by wrapping them both with floral tape and poke the stem down through the screen. This technique works well with strawflowers and Queen-Anne's-lace.

The black, plastic plant trays found at greenhouses also work in a pinch; just insert the stems into their drainage holes and allow the plant materials to dry.

Drying with Desiccants

Desiccants are substances that absorb moisture and are most often used to dry very delicate flowers such as calendula, roses, and zinnias. The most common desiccant, one used by professionals and hobbyists alike, is silica gel. It is available from florists, craft shops, and many garden-supply centers. Silica gel, which looks very much like white sand, contains small crystals of cobalt chloride; these crystals change color as they absorb moisture.

When working with silica gel, always wear a dust mask, and never, under any circumstances, use silica gel to dry materials that will be eaten. The gel is toxic and may absorb pesticides from roadside- or garden-plant materials!

To prepare blooms for drying, cut the stems as short as possible. Spread ½ to 1 inch of silica gel in the bottom of a shallow container and arrange the blooms on top; leave plenty of space between the blooms and limit yourself to a single type of bloom in each container. Flat-faced flowers, such as daisies, should be positioned face down; rounded flowers, face up. Spiked flowers and those with bell or trumpet shapes dry best when placed on their sides (see Figure 5).

Using great care, cover the flowers with another ½ inch of silica gel, making sure that the flower beneath isn't crumpled or wrinkled. (Depending on the depth of your container, you may create up to three layers of blooms and gel.) Place a tight-fitting lid on the container and set it aside.

Check the contents once every three days until the blooms feel dry to the touch. You'll know you've let the blooms dry too long if they crumble when they're handled.

When the flowers have dried, carefully pour off the silica gel until the flowers are revealed, then transfer the flowers to a flat work surface. To remove any residual dust, brush the dried blooms lightly with a soft artist's brush.

Silica gel may be reused many times. When it begins to change color (the manufacturer's instructions will describe these changes), pour it into a shallow pan and bake it at 225°F for 20 minutes to remove all the moisture. Allow the gel to cool and store it in an airtight container.

Desiccant-dried plant materials reabsorb moisture much more readily than you might wish, so display your finished projects only during the driest months of the year. During humid months, pack the projects in dark plastic bags or cardboard boxes, adding some silica gel to the bottom as added protection. Another way to keep desiccant-dried materials in good shape is to spray the dried materials with two or three coats of clear lacquer or with any clear, airtight sealant.

Another common desiccant mixture consists of two parts borax and one part dry white sand. Before using this homemade mixture, remove all moisture from it by heating it for two hours in a 200°F oven. Cool the mixture, store it in airtight containers, and use it just as you would use silica gel. Sand, cat box litter, and cornmeal will also work as desiccants, but because these materials are much heavier than silica gel, you run the risk of damaging delicate blooms.

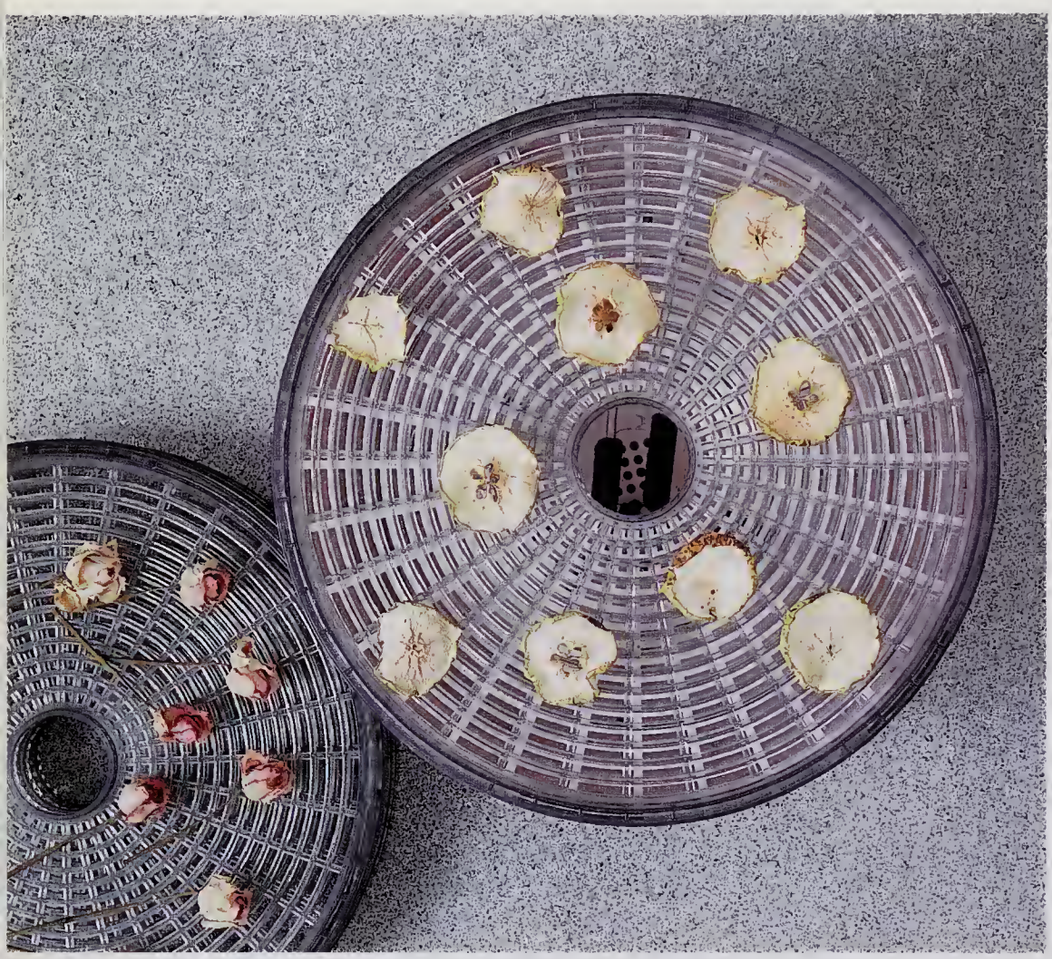
Drying in the Microwave

Used in conjunction with silica gel, a microwave oven can speed up the drying process considerably. Unfortunately, because these miraculous machines vary so widely in their wattage, settings, and performance, you'll need to experiment several times with each material. Don't forget to record the results in your notebook so you'll know what to expect the next time around. Also remember that microwaving will remove the fragrance from most materials.

Forget the popcorn; instead, pop in your plants. Your family microwave is a great nature-craft tool for drying plant materials.

Prepare a nonmetal container by spreading a thin layer of silica gel on its bottom. Arrange the blooms as you would for ordinary, silica-gel drying. Then spread a thin layer of gel over and between the blooms. If your microwave has settings ranging from one to ten, set it at four (about 300 watts); if it has only three or four settings, set it at half power (about 350 watts); and if it has only high and defrost settings, use the defrost setting (about 200 watts).

As a rule of thumb, one or more blooms or pieces of foliage in ½ pound of silica gel will take about 2 to 2½ minutes to dry. If you find that you have overdried the materials, try another batch, decreasing the heating time by 20 seconds. If the materials aren't sufficiently dry, heat the next batch for an additional 15 seconds. Establishing the required heating times for



When you want picture-perfect dried materials, choose an electric dehydrator. It's perfectly suited for drying fruit slices and many-petaled flowers, such as roses.

different materials will definitely require experimentation.

After heating, remove the container and allow it to stand undisturbed for about 10 minutes (for fragile blooms) or up to 30 minutes (for sturdier blooms). Place a lid on the container during this time, cracking it slightly to allow moisture to escape.

Microwave ovens also do an excellent job of drying materials without silica gel. Place the materials on a paper towel and cover them with another paper towel before heating. Especially juicy materials, such as citrus slices, may require two or three layers of paper towels underneath, and you may need to replace the dampened sheets with dry ones about halfway through the drying process. Another method of absorbing released moisture is to place the fresh materials inside a flat paper bag, fold the bag once to close it loosely, and then place it over a microwave-safe container so that the leaking juices will be contained. Drying times will vary greatly depending upon the material, so start with 1 minute and then add more heating time in 20-second increments.

Drying in the Oven

Oven drying is especially effective for rapid drying of fruit slices and large flowers with many petals. Set the oven at 175°F, place the flowers or fruit face up on the oven racks, and bake the materials, with the oven door cracked, for three to ten hours. Be sure to place a cookie sheet or shallow pan beneath the racks to catch any leaking juices. Remove the materials before they have dried completely and allow them to finish drying on a screen or a rack in a warm, dry, dark room.

Drying in an Electric Dehydrator

For the serious nature crafter, an electric dehydrator can prove to be a real boon. These tidy, energy-efficient contraptions are manufactured in sizes that will fit on any kitchen countertop or table. Although models are constructed differently, their basic operating theory is the same. When the machine is turned on, it circulates evenly heated air, usually through a number of stacked trays.

Dehydrators are handy for air-drying slices of sugar-laden fruits that might otherwise attract insects and that have an irritating tendency to scorch in traditional ovens.

Preserving with Glycerin

Glycerin preservation—a method by which the natural moisture in plant materials is replaced with a preservative—isn't exactly a drying method, but it serves the same purpose. Plant materials preserved in this fashion retain an almost-fresh appearance and texture.

For instructions on how to preserve green or autumn leaves with glycerin, see "Leaves" on page 165. Evergreen foliage and grasses may also be preserved with glycerin. Although evergreen foliage may be harvested at any time, it does best when it's harvested in late summer.

Grasses can be harvested just as they begin to bloom and woody-stemmed foliage just as the leaves mature.

To prepare woody stems, make a solution of two parts hot water to one part glycerin and mix it thoroughly. Cut a ½-inch slit at the bottom of the stem and immediately place the stem in about 3 inches of this solution. Leave the container in a warm, dry place, out of direct sunlight. As the moisture in the plant evaporates, the solution will be drawn up the stem and into the leaves and blooms. Maintain the original liquid level by topping off with additional solution as necessary. Depending on the thickness of the leaves, the entire process will take between four days and four weeks. Remove the stems before oily drops of the solution begin to appear on the leaves. The glycerin solution may be strained and reused several times.

The same glycerin solution works well with seed heads and grasses, but it should be cooled before the stems are placed into it. These materials should be removed somewhat sooner—usually within two days. To dye plant materials, add food coloring to the solution.

Plants preserved with glycerin do tend to reabsorb moisture, so keep any arrangements in which they're used away from high-humidity environments. Do not, however, store them in airtight containers because moisture in the materials may condense and cause mildew and molds. Perforated cardboard boxes that are kept in a dry location are ideal.

Plants for Drying

MATERIAL	HARVEST HINTS	DRYING METHODS
Anise hyssop	Cut flower stalks when in full bloom.	Hang in bunches.
Apple	Purchase only unblemished, ripe fruit. Slice horizontally to show starlike pattern created by seeds; slice vertically to accentuate apple silhouette.	Dry in oven. Soak ⅛- to ¼-inch-wide slices for 15 minutes in mixture of 1 tablespoon of fresh lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of commercial fruit preservative, and 1 quart of water. Pat dry and bake on waxed paper–lined cookie sheets at 200°F for 2 hours, turning frequently. Dry in microwave without silica gel. Complete drying on racks or screens.
Artemisia	Harvest anytime.	Dry upright in containers. Hang in small bunches.
Baby's-breath	Gather at full-bloom stage.	Dry upright in containers. Hang in small bunches.
Basil	Cut stems before plants bloom.	Hang in small bunches. Dry leaves on screens. Dry leaves in microwave without silica gel for about 1 minute.
Bay	Harvest anytime.	Dry leaves on screens. Hang in bunches.
Bee balm	Cut stems right after blooms open.	Hang in bunches. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Black-eyed Susan	Gather at full-bloom stage.	Dry on screens.
Borage	Harvest leaves anytime; cut bloom stems just after peak-bloom stage.	Dry in silica gel for best color retention. Dry blooms face down on screens.
Boxwood	Pick from late summer through winter.	Allow to dry in place in the arrangement or wreath. Preserve with glycerin.
Calendula	Harvest after blooms open.	Dry single blooms face down on screens. Dry in silica gel. Dry in microwave with or without silica gel. Dry in electric dehydrator.

MATERIAL	HARVEST HINTS	DRYING METHODS
Carnation	Cut blooms as soon as they open.	Dry blooms and leaves on screens. Dry in microwave with silica gel. Dry in electric dehydrator.
Catnip	Harvest leaves when young; blooms just after they've opened.	Hang in bunches. Dry leaves in microwave without silica gel for 1½ minutes. Dry leaves on screens. (Lock up your cats!)
Chili pepper	Pick or purchase unblemished, ripe peppers.	Dry in oven. Cut small slit in each pepper and bake at 175°F on cookie sheet lined with waxed paper for 10 hours. Turn periodically. Dry in microwave without silica gel. Pierce in several places with needle before starting. Cook between single layers of paper towels. Dry in electric dehydrator. Hang in bunches.
Chinese lantern	Gather stems when calyxes (bases) are open or closed.	Dry upright in containers. Dry on screens after reinforcing stems with floral wire.
Chrysanthemum	Harvest before flower centers have completely opened.	Dry on screens. Dry in silica gel. Dry in electric dehydrator.
Citrus fruit	Purchase only unblemished, ripe fruit.	Dry in oven. Cut into ⅛- to ¼-inch-thick slices. Bake on unlined cookie sheets at 200°F until completely dry. Do not allow to brown; turn frequently. Dry in microwave. Arrange slices on 3 layers of paper towels, covering with 2 more layers. Complete drying process on screens or racks.
Cockscomb	Cut at full-bloom stage.	Hang in small bunches after stripping away foliage. Dry blooms on screens.
Coneflower	Harvest seed heads when petals have fallen, and flowers are at peak-bloom stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry upright in containers. Dry in microwave set at low.

(continued on next page)

Plants for Drying—Continued

MATERIAL	HARVEST HINTS	DRYING METHODS
Cotton lavender	Gather at full-bloom stage.	Hang in bunches.
Daisy	Gather anytime between bud and bloom stages.	Dry on screens. Dry face down in silica gel. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Feverfew	Harvest at peak-bloom stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry separated blooms and leaves on screens. Dry blooms or leaves in silica gel. Dry in microwave without silica gel for 1½ minutes.
Geranium, scented	Harvest when mature.	Dry on screens. Dry in microwave.
Globe amaranth	Collect main flower heads as they open; replace stems with wires unless you plan to dry heads in microwave. (Never place wire-fortified stems in microwave.)	Hang in bunches. Dry on screens. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Globe thistle	Pick at full-bloom stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry upright in containers. Dry mature leaves in silica gel.
Goldenrod	Gather when florets are still closed.	Hang in bunches. Dry upright in containers. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Gourd and pumpkin	Cut from vines when stems turn brown and gourd is fully mature, leaving short length of stem attached; do not use wax-coated gourds because they will rot when air-dried—grow them yourself or purchase them at local market.	Air-dry. Rinse in solution of warm water and mild detergent. Then rinse in clean water. Place in solution of 1 part bleach to 2 parts water for 20 minutes to kill bacteria that might cause fruit to rot. Remove from bleach solution and allow to dry in any warm, dry location. Dry in microwave for 15 minutes at low setting after drilling ½-inch hole in each end.
Grass	Harvest at flowering stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry upright in containers.

MATERIAL	HARVEST HINTS	DRYING METHODS
Hydrangea	Harvest blooms in autumn, just after buds in centers have fallen free of flowers.	Dry upright in containers. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Larkspur	Cut just as blooms begin to open.	Hang in bunches. Dry upright in containers. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Lavender	Harvest at full-bloom stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry on screens. Do not microwave.
Lemon balm	Harvest leaves for culinary use before bloom stage; blooms do not dry well; flower stalks will retain shapes if cut when blooms first open.	Hang in bunches. Dry detached leaves on screens. Dry leaves in microwave without silica gel.
Lemon verbena	Harvest leaves anytime; cut bloom stems when blooms start to open.	Hang in small bunches.
Love-in-a-mist	Cut stems as soon as they mature.	Hang in bunches. Dry upright in containers.
Magnolia	Collect branches of mature leaves anytime.	Preserve with glycerin.
Marigold	Gather at full-bloom stage.	Dry on screens. Dry in silica gel. Dry in electric dehydrator. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Marjoram	Cut at peak-bloom stage.	Dry leaves on screens. Hang in bunches. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Mint	Harvest leaves for culinary use before bloom stage; harvest blooms at peak-bloom stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry detached leaves on screens. Dry stems upright in containers. Dry in microwave without silica gel.

(continued on next page)

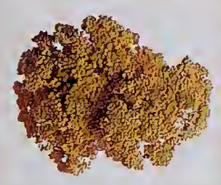
Plants for Drying—Continued

MATERIAL	HARVEST HINTS	DRYING METHODS
Money plant	Cut midsummer to late summer.	Hang in bunches. When plants are dry, peel off outer coating of each seed pod until only papery, white lining remains.
Mushroom	Pick or purchase unblemished specimens.	Dry in oven. Spread on cookie rack with pan underneath to catch juices. Bake at 200°F for 2 to 3 hours.
Okra	Purchase only unblemished specimens.	After piercing both ends with fork, heat for 3 minutes in microwave. Complete drying on screens or racks. Dry in electric dehydrator.
Pearly everlasting	Gather before flowers have opened completely.	Hang in bunches.
Pomegranate	Purchase only unblemished, ripe fruit.	Dry whole fruit on screens. Use skewer to poke several holes in blossom end, then use needle to punch many holes through skin. Place tray underneath to catch leaking juices. Dry for up to 1 month. Fruit may also be sliced in half, cleaned out, screen-dried, and hot-glued back together.
Poppy	Harvest blooms at full-bloom stage and seed heads when hard and mature.	Hang in bunches. Preserve with glycerin. Dry seed heads by placing stems upright in containers. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Purple coneflower	Cut at peak-bloom stage.	Dry in silica gel for best color retention. Dry on screens. Hang individual stems.
Queen-Anne's-lace	Harvest leaves anytime; cut bloom stems before plant goes to seed.	Hang in bunches. Dry on screens, or upright in containers. Dry in silica gel.

MATERIAL	HARVEST HINTS	DRYING METHODS
Raspberry	Gather just before fully ripened.	Dry on screens with stems attached. Dry in electric dehydrator.
Rose	Harvest buds when they are tight or just slightly open, blooms just before full-bloom stage, and petals at full-bloom stage.	Dry buds or petals on screens. Dry blooms in silica gel for best color retention. Dry blooms in oven. Dry blooms and buds in electric dehydrator. Dry blooms and buds in microwave set at low.
Rosemary	Harvest when mature.	Hang in bunches. Dry stems on screens.
Sage	Cut foliage anytime; cut blooms at peak.	Hang in bunches. Dry upright in containers. Dry leaves in microwave without silica gel.
Seeds: melon and squash	Scoop from ripe fruit.	Dry in microwave. First soak in solution of ½ cup of bleach and 1 quart of water for 20 minutes. Rinse, pat dry, and arrange in single layers between paper towels. Heat at half power for 5 minutes, turning once halfway through. Dry on screens and then in oven. Rinse first, screen-dry, and bake at 200°F for 25 minutes.
Squash	Purchase only unblemished fruit.	Dry slices in microwave between 2 paper towels.
Statice	Gather at full-bloom stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Strawflower	Collect main flower heads as they begin to open.	Dry on screens, either removing stems entirely or fortifying them with floral wire. Dry in microwave, placing bloom face down, without silica gel. (Never place wire-fortified stems in microwave.)

(continued on next page)

Plants for Drying—Continued

MATERIAL	HARVEST HINTS	DRYING METHODS
Sunflower	Cut before fully mature.	Hang in bunches of 3 to 5 flower heads. Dry on screens. Dry in oven, removing stems first and baking on oven rack at 150°F for about 8 hours.
Sweet Annie	Harvest before or after seed stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry on screens.
Thyme	Harvest blooms at peak-bloom stage. Harvest leaves for culinary use before bloom stage.	Hang in bunches. Dry on screens. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Yarrow 	Harvest at peak-bloom stage.	Hang in small bunches. Dry on screens after removing leaves from stems. Dry in microwave without silica gel.
Zinnia	Gather at full-bloom stage.	Dry on screens. Dry in silica gel. Dry in electric dehydrator.

You don't need a barn full of dried materials to make these quick-and-easy corsages. Each corsage needs just a handful of stems for eye-catching results.

Miniature Dried Flower Corsages

WHAT YOU NEED (for each corsage)

Assorted dried materials as listed under the individual corsages that follow

Small, dried ivy leaves

3 inches of medium-gauge floral wire

Green floral tape

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

4-inch-diameter cotton or paper doily

Corsage pin (available from florists and craft-supply stores)

INDIVIDUAL CORSAGE MATERIALS

Cockscomb Corsage

1 stem of dried pink statice, 2½ inches long

3 stems of dried oregano, 2 inches long

1 stem of dried burgundy cockscomb, 2 inches long

Ivy Corsage

2 stems of dried miniature ivy, 4½ inches long

2 stems of dried ivy, 3 inches long

1 stem of dried yarrow, dyed red, 2 inches long

3 assorted cones and pods on wires (see Step 4 of the "S-Curve Cone Centerpiece" on page 55)

1 yard of red satin ribbon, ¼ inch wide, tied into a bow

Gardenia Corsage

1 stem of dried mint blooms, 1½ inches long

3 stems of dried lavender, 2 to 3 inches long

4 silk gardenias, 1 to 2½ inches long

2 artificial bluebird feathers (available at craft-supply stores)

Black-Eyed Susan Corsage

5 dried red chili peppers, 2 inches long

1 dried black-eyed Susan, 2¾ inches long

5 stems of dried oregano, 2½ inches long

2 dried ivy leaves

1 dried black-eyed Susan flower head

1 piece of red netting, 2 inches square

Larkspur Corsage

2 stems of dried purple statice, 2½ inches long

3 stems of dried red globe amaranths, 1½ to 2 inches long

1 stem of larkspur, dried in silica gel

2 sprigs of dried baby's-breath, 1½ to 2½ inches long

WHAT YOU DO

1 Gather the dried materials into a small cluster. Straighten the floral wire and place it parallel to the stems of the dried materials so that about ½ inch of wire overlaps ½ inch of the stem ends. Wrap the wire and stems together with green floral tape, spiraling the tape downward to cover the entire length of the wire. Then, starting from the bottom, shape the free end of the wire to resemble a curled stem.

2 Hot-glue the back of the taped cluster to the center of the cotton or paper doily. Then hot-glue one or more ivy leaves to the base of the flower cluster on the front of the doily. Hot-glue the additional decorations listed for the individual corsages in place; then hot-glue the corsage pin to the back of the doily.

"Forever Yours" Wedding Bouquet

WHAT YOU NEED

18 stems of glycerin-preserved eucalyptus: one 12 inches long, one 8 inches long, eight 6 inches long, and eight 4 inches long

1 handful of wild grass

6 stems of peppergrass, 3½ inches long

5 stems of purple statice, 3½ inches long

7 stems of white statice, 3½ inches long

50 strawflowers, in various colors and sizes

Plastic bouquet holder with dry floral foam

9-inch-diameter lace collar

White floral tape

About 50 floral picks

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

12 strands of white faux 4 mm pearls, two 18 inches long and ten 8 inches long (available at craft-supply and fabric stores)

2 yards of white lace ribbon, 1 inch wide

2 yards of cranberry ribbon, ½ inch wide

2 yards of purple ribbon, ¼ inch wide

About 3 inches of white, medium-gauge floral wire

WHAT YOU DO

1 Insert the bouquet holder into the lace collar and use white floral tape to secure the collar tails to the handle of the holder.

2 As you follow this step, think of the front of the bouquet as the face of a clock. Insert four of the 6-inch-long eucalyptus stems into the foam at the three, six, nine, and twelve o'clock positions. Insert the remaining four 6-inch-long stems between these. Then insert the 4-inch-long eucalyptus stems throughout the bouquet.

3 Insert half of the wild grass, spreading it throughout the bouquet. Also insert the peppergrass stems around the outer circumfer-

A Victorian bride might very well have picked and dried the strawflowers for her wedding bouquet.

ence of the bouquet and the stems of purple and white statice throughout the bouquet.

4 Set aside five or six strawflowers for use in Step 5. Attach a floral pick to the stem of each remaining bloom and add these strawflowers to the bouquet, placing the largest ones in the center of the bouquet and the smallest at the outer edges.

5 To make a cascade, hot-glue the set-aside strawflowers onto the 12-inch-long eucalyptus stem, positioning the smallest strawflower bloom at the tail end of the eucalyptus. Then insert both the 8-inch-long and the 12-inch-long eucalyptus stems at the bottom of the bouquet, placing the long stem behind the short one.

6 Place two 8-inch lengths of pearls together side-by-side, attach a floral pick, and wrap the pick with white floral tape. Do the same with the two 18-inch lengths of pearls. Insert the picks into the bottom of the bouquet at the center.

7 Using the three lengths of ribbon, make a simple two-loop bow, securing its center with a short piece of white floral wire (see "Two-Loop Bow" on page 52). Attach a floral pick to the wired center of the bow and wrap the pick with white floral tape. Then insert the picked bow behind the long eucalyptus stems so that the strings of pearls are in the center of the bow.

8 Attach a floral pick to each of the eight remaining 8-inch lengths of pearls, wrap the picks with floral tape, and insert these throughout the bouquet. Then insert the remaining wild grass.

Victorian Wreath

What You Need

36 stems of sweet Annie, each about 12 inches long

12-inch-diameter grapevine wreath base, made with narrow vines

2 stems of mountain daisies, 24 to 36 blooms per stem

2 hydrangea flower heads, broken into small pieces

20 pink globe amaranths

20 purple globe amaranths

2 straight, ¼-inch-diameter twigs, 2½ inches long

10 glycerin-preserved fern fronds, 8 inches long*

Pruning shears

Floral picks

Green floral tape

Wide-tipped felt marker

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

2⅓ yards of light green organdy ribbon, 1½ inches wide

2⅓ yards of dark green organdy ribbon, 1½ inches wide

*You can purchase glycerin-preserved materials from craft-supply stores and mail-order suppliers, or you can preserve the materials yourself (see "Preserving with Glycerin" on page 78 and "Preserving Leaves" on page 165).

What You Do

1 Using the pruning shears, cut 6 to 8 stems of sweet Annie, each about 4 to 6 inches long, and gather them into a cluster. Attach a floral pick to the cluster and secure it by wrapping the pick and the stems with green floral tape. Repeat this step to make as many clusters as the 36 stems will provide.

2 Using the wide-tipped felt marker, mark the front top and front bottom

A dramatic organdy ribbon and a delicate blend of colorful dried blooms highlight this beautiful wreath.

of the grapevine wreath base to create reference points for your design.

3 Starting at the bottom of the wreath base and continuing up one side and then the other, hot-glue the picked sweet Annie to the base. The picked ends of each cluster should be at the top so that the bloom ends of succeeding clusters will hide the picks of those already attached. (In Step 6 you'll cover the space where the picked stems meet at the top of the wreath.)

4 Remove the mountain daisies from their stems. Then hot-glue these flower heads, the hydrangea pieces, and the pink and purple amaranths to the sweet Annie, taking care to fill in all the spaces on the wreath base.

5 On each side of the wreath, just below the center, slide in one of the straight twigs. Check to be sure the twigs are even with each other. Then remove them, apply hot-glue to each, and reinsert them into the wreath.

6 Cut a 1⅓-yard length of the light green ribbon and a 1⅓-yard length of the dark green ribbon. Place the two pieces back to back and form a single bow with the doubled ribbons (see "Two-Loop Bow" on page 52). Hot-glue the bow to the top center of the wreath, over the picked stems of sweet Annie.

7 Cut the remaining ribbon into four equal lengths and make a deep V-shaped cut at every end. Pair one light green ribbon to each dark green ribbon and place them back to back.

8 Using one of the pairs of ribbons, first hot-glue a V-shaped end onto the outer, protruding end of a twig, allowing the ribbon to extend 3 inches beyond the end of the twig. Then, working toward the wreath, hot-glue the ribbon in loops to the twig, covering each glue spot with the succeeding loop. When you reach the wreath, loop and hot-glue the ribbon one more time, and then bring it up to the bow and hot-glue it in place. Repeat with the other ribbon pair and the other twig.

Rose-Bead Necklace

Traditional rose-bead recipes call for salt, but the designer who created these beads tells us that salt attracts moisture and prevents rose beads from drying.

WHAT YOU NEED (for 2 necklaces)

- 2 gallons of fresh rose petals
- Pruning shears
- Old-fashioned, manual meat grinder with fine meat-cutting blade
- Refrigerator container with lid
- 72 T-pins
- 1 large sheet of cork board or thick cardboard
- Shallow cardboard tray or airy containers, like berry boxes
- Sewing needle with large eye
- Nylon bead-stringing thread (FF gauge) or carpet and button thread
- Scissors
- 2 bead tips
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks
- Needle-nose pliers
- 29 gold rondelle beads
- 2 jump rings
- 2-piece barrel clasp

WHAT YOU DO

1 Unless you have an acre's worth of roses, you'll need to collect these blooms a few at a time. Start on a clear, sunny day, after the morning dew has evaporated. Using the pruning shears, harvest well-opened blooms rather than the buds.

2 After collecting the flowers, gently remove the petals and, using the meat grinder and the finest meat-cutting blade that you have, grind the petals thoroughly into a paste. Store the ground petals in a sealed container in the refrigerator, adding petals each day as you collect and grind them.

3 After you've collected and ground at least 2 gallons of petals, regrind the paste 15 to 20 times. Yes, patience is required. Your goal is to produce a paste that

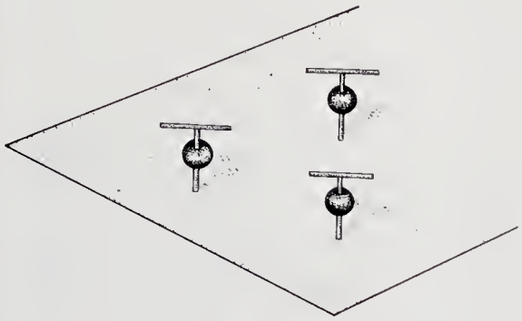


Figure 1

Figure 2

is as fine and malleable as clay. Test the paste occasionally by trying to roll a small amount of it into a ball. When the paste will hold its shape, you can start to shape the beads.

4 Shape the rose-petal paste into beads by rolling marble-size lumps of it into balls. (Keep in mind that your beads will shrink considerably as they cure: A marble-size moist bead will turn into a pea-size dry bead.) Place the lump of paste in the palm of one hand and roll it around with the fingertips of your other hand as if you were rolling a small meatball. One warning: Rose paste stains, so wear your oldest clothes and don't work over a linen tablecloth!

5 To create holes in the beads, gently insert a T-pin through the center of each bead while the bead is still moist. Position the pierced bead in the center of the pin shaft and insert the pin into a sheet of corkboard or cardboard (see Figure 1). Make sure that the bottom of the bead doesn't touch the surface of the board or the bead will dry flat at that end.

6 Place the bead-covered board in a dry, warm area. (Believe it or not, your family car provides an excellent drying environment when parked in the summer sun. In fact, the upholstery will retain the wonderful fragrance of roses for weeks.) Using your fingertips, rotate the beads occasionally so that they don't stick to the T-pins as they dry. Unless the humidity is high, the beads will dry in about one week.

7 When the beads are dry, remove them from the pins and spread them out in an uncovered cardboard tray or in airy containers. Allow the inner surfaces of the pinholes to dry for another day or two.

8 Thread the needle with the nylon bead-stringing thread and double the thread, cutting the ends of the thread so that the length of doubled thread is several inches longer than the desired length of your necklace.

9 Insert the needle through the hole in one bead tip. Tie a knot at the end of the thread and, using the scissors, trim the thread ends from the knot (see Figure 2). Pull the knot tightly against the inner surface of the bead tip. Apply a little hot glue to the knot itself and use a pair of pliers to close the end of the bead tip around the knot.

10 Starting with a gold rondelle bead, alternately string the rondelles and rose beads onto the thread until the necklace is the desired length. If you wish, vary the sizes of the necklace beads, stringing the larger ones in the center of the necklace.

11 Repeat Step 9 to add the other bead tip to the opposite end of the necklace. Then slip a jump ring through each bead tip and close the rings with the pliers. Finally, slip the barrel clasp sections onto the jump rings and close the clasp sections with the pliers.

For additional information on using rose petals, *see "Pressed Flowers & Herbs" on page 190.*

Designer Tip

To make rose-bead earrings, visit your local craft shop, bead supplier, or jeweler and purchase the large gold seed beads and easy-to-assemble hardware, called findings.

E EVERGREENS

When most people hear the word "evergreens," the first thing they think of is a "wreath." Certainly, a holiday wreath made with fragrant pine boughs and red holly berries is a Christmas staple. But evergreens can make just as enduring an impression in summer, spring, or fall when they are combined in appealing ways with dried flowers, fruits, and other seasonal natural materials.

Evergreens grow in abundance and in a wide range of shapes and colors—at least a dozen shades of green, in fact. But what evergreens have in common is the truth behind their name: They are available for use all year long. Stroll through the woods or around your yard, and you will see for yourself how diverse this group of perennials really is. Take along your pruning shears and cut a variety of evergreens to use at home.

Many types of evergreens are also available for purchase in craft-supply stores and discount outlets. Sometimes these materials are sprayed with paint to heighten their color, or they are preserved with glycerin to help them remain supple and retain much of their natural color and shape. To learn how to preserve your materials with glycerin at home, see "Preserving Leaves" on page 165 and "Preserving with Glycerin" on page 78.

If you work with fresh-cut evergreens, you can let some of them dry in place. Bay leaves, boxwood, cedar, eucalyptus, fir, and ivy do especially well. But just like your favorite Christmas tree, most evergreens will become overly dry and brittle in a few weeks. Ask your local nursery to suggest which evergreens in your part of the country will hold up the longest after they are cut.

You can make a wreath or swag by using evergreens as the main materials covering the base and other materials as accents. Or you can reverse this ratio so that the evergreens are the accent to a predominately floral arrangement. Wreaths made from evergreens can be assembled in three ways: (1) If you are working with strong-stemmed evergreens, such as firs, cut the stems at an angle and insert them directly into a straw, polystyrene, or grapevine base. If you use a grapevine base, you will need to hot-glue the stems between the vine strands (see "Christmas Wreath" on the opposite page). (2) If the stems are more delicate, trim them short, attach them in small groups to floral picks, and insert them into the base. (3) You can also wire clusters of stems to a wire ring base or hot-glue individual leaves to a grapevine, polystyrene, or straw base.

How to Keep Evergreens Supple

Here are two ways to keep your cut evergreens supple longer:

- Before attaching the evergreens, dip them in a bucket containing a mixture of four parts water to one part acrylic floor wax. Shake off the excess and let the needles dry before using the branches. Use the same mixture in a spray mister to apply to the finished arrangement. This technique works well on ferns and leaves, too.
- Mist your finished arrangement weekly with water from a quart spray bottle into which you've mixed half a teaspoon of liquid fabric softener.

Christmas Wreath

Thistle berries and rose hips put a slightly different spin on a traditional holiday wreath of red and green.

What You Need

12-inch-diameter straw wreath base

95 stems of blue spruce, 8 inches long

40 stems of hemlock with small cones still attached, 6 inches long

6 clusters of red bayberries, 2 inches long

8 stems of mountain holly, 3 inches long

7 sprigs of mistletoe with berries, 3 inches long

4 clusters of thistle berries, 2 inches long

3 white-pine cones

3 rose hips

3 large handfuls of Spanish moss

1 green chenille stem, 12 inches long

146 floral picks

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Floral pins

What You Do

1 Fashion a hanger for your wreath with the chenille stem (see "Hangers" on page 118). Attach floral picks to all of the blue-spruce stems. Starting at the top of the wreath, insert each picked stem into the straw base at an angle, moving in a clockwise direction. Cover the entire base, including the inner and outer rims.

2 Attach floral picks to the hemlock stems and insert them into the base at the same angle as the spruce stems. Make sure the small cones show. Fully cover the front of the wreath and the inner rim with the hemlock stems.

3 Hot-glue the clusters of bayberries to the front of the wreath, spacing them about 3 inches apart; angle them as you did the evergreens. Attach picks to the holly stems and insert them around the front of the wreath in the same direction as the other materials.

4 Hot-glue the mistletoe sprigs and the thistle berries, placing them between the bayberries. Hot-glue the white-pine cones 6 inches apart around the front of the wreath. Attach picks to the rose hips and insert them into the front of the wreath about 8 inches apart.

5 Finish the wreath by covering the back with Spanish moss; use floral pins to hold the moss in place.

Evergreens create a backdrop for delicate dried hydrangea and sweet Annie in this magnificent garland.

Gilded Evergreen Garland

WHAT YOU NEED

30 magnolia leaves, large and small

10 pinecones

100 stems of glycerin-preserved juniper, 8 to 12 inches long

100 stems of glycerin-preserved cedar

50 sprigs of dried sweet Annie

50 stems of dried green Australian tree fern, 8 to 10 inches long

20 stems of dried large-head hydrangea, 6 inches long

Gold spray paint

Artificial evergreen garland, 8 yards long

6 green chenille stems, 12 inches long

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

4 yards of medium-size gold beads on wire

4 yards of small-size gold beads on wire

Spool of thin-gauge floral wire

5 yards of gold wired ribbon, 2 inches wide

Scissors

WHAT YOU DO

1 Spray paint the magnolia leaves and the pinecones gold and let them dry. Shape and fluff the artificial greenery that serves as the garland's spine. To form hangers, tie two chenille stems around the center of the garland and two on each side about 29 inches in from each end.

2 Make 30 bundles of juniper and 30 bundles of cedar, each with three to four stems. Starting at one end and working your way toward the center, hot-glue the juniper and the cedar bundles evenly along the length of the garland, placing the tips of one over the glued stems of the one before it. Stop at the center. Start again at the opposite end, working your way toward the center once more.

3 Make 15 bundles of sweet Annie and 15 bundles of Australian tree fern, each with three to four stems. Hot-glue them evenly along the entire length of the garland. Use plenty of glue. Once you have added the evergreens, the sweet Annie, and the tree fern you should not see any of the artificial greenery on the front of the garland.

Evergreens for Craft Projects

- Bay leaves
- Boxwood
- Cedar
- Cypress
- Eucalyptus
- Fir (all varieties)
- Hemlock
- Holly
- Ivy
- Juniper
- Magnolia leaves
- Mint
- Myrtle
- Pine (all varieties)
- Salal leaves
- Spruce

4 Weave the wire of the medium-size gold beads through the garland, attaching it to the spine with pieces of floral wire, making sure the beads drape gracefully. Do the same with the length of small-size gold beads, weaving them so that they balance and complement the larger strand.

5 Make a five-loop bow with the gold ribbon (see "Bows" on page 46), cut sparrow-tail ends, and wire the bow to the center of the garland. Use pieces of floral wire to attach the rest of the ribbon, weaving it around and behind the natural materials. Then make V-shaped cuts at the ribbon ends.

6 Create clusters of two to three pinecones by wrapping floral wire around the bottom petals of the cones and twisting the wire ends together. Then wire all the pinecones to the garland in a random manner, filling in wherever there are gaps.

7 Create clusters of magnolia leaves, mixing large and small together with two to four leaves per cluster. Hot-glue the leaf clusters to the garland, tucking the stems under other materials.

8 Hot-glue the hydrangeas to the base singly, in pairs, and in threes. To create a focal point, save the largest, fullest hydrangea for the center of the garland and hot-glue it in place.

F FEATHERS

Feathers make attractive embellishments on many nature-craft projects and can even be used as the predominant material. Many craft-supply shops and mail-order companies stock a wide range of feathers for craft use. If you're the hunter-gatherer type, by all means build up a collection of "found" feathers, but be very careful to identify the birds from which these feathers come. Using feathers from migratory birds, even if you've come upon them during a stroll across a meadow, is illegal.

Gourd & Feather Arrangement

What You Need

2 handfuls of small stones

1 dried gourd, 6 inches tall, with top removed

2 large handfuls of Spanish moss

12 peacock feathers, 4 to 18 inches long

10 mixed dark and light feathers, 6 to 14 inches long

24 guinea fowl feathers, 3 to 8 inches long

5 golden rooster feathers, 4 to 10 inches long

6 stems of dried sweet rocket seed pods, 8 to 15 inches long

1 branch of dried sweet gum, 18 inches long

1 block of dry floral foam

Serrated knife

Floral pins

What You Do

1 Place the small stones in the bottom of the gourd; they will keep the gourd in an upright position after the natural materials are inserted.

2 Fill the gourd with dry floral foam, using a serrated knife to cut the foam into large chunks and pressing the chunks into the stones to help keep them stable. The upper surface of the foam should rest about ½ inch below the rim of the gourd.

3 Cover the floral foam with Spanish moss, inserting several floral pins to secure it to the foam.

4 Set aside the peacock feathers. Then, using the photograph on the opposite page as a guide, insert the remaining feathers to create your arrangement. Start by placing the tallest feathers toward the center and back of the arrangement and the shorter feathers toward the front. Your two goals are to create the illusion that the feathers are growing from inside the gourd and to bring the viewer's eye toward the focal point at the rim, where the golden rooster feathers are positioned.

5 Insert the peacock feathers to reinforce the visual line of your arrangement, draping the shortest one downward from the rim of the gourd. This short feather will accentuate the focal point of the arrangement.

For an arrangement that's totally unexpected, try mixing feathers and gourds. Instructions for making the red gourd shown here can be found in "Painted Gourd with Beads" on page 133.

6 Insert the sweet rocket seed pods next. Because they are the same color as the rooster feathers, they will bring the eye toward the focal point.

7 Insert the sweet gum branch to add height. Check to see that the Spanish moss covers the floral foam completely and that all the floral pins are well disguised.

Designer Tips

Before arranging this stunning display of feathers, you may want to read "Floral Arrangements" on page 101. Some of the tips in that chapter will make your job easier!

If you find that any of the feather quills is too fragile to insert directly into the foam, cut a 3-inch-long piece of medium-gauge floral wire, insert about 1 inch of its length into the bottom of the quill, and add a drop of hot glue to fasten the wire securely to the quill.

The contrasting colors and fascinating textures of natural materials lend themselves perfectly to this stunning black-and-white creation.

Black & White Feather Wreath

What You Need

- 10 stems of dried German statice, 12 or more inches long
- 60 stems of dried white winged everlastings, 2 to 3 inches long
- 12 stalks of dried oats, 1 to 3 inches long
- 12 dried wheat straws, 1 to 3 inches long
- 6 dried miniature daisy blooms
- 6 dried white strawflower blooms
- 15 guinea fowl feathers, 1 to 2 inches long
- 1 branch of dried money plant pods
- 7 dried false indigo pods
- Black acrylic spray paint
- Scissors
- 8-inch-diameter crimped-wire wreath base
- Green floral tape
- 1 gray chenille stem, 12 inches long, or 1 length of medium-gauge floral wire, 10 inches long
- 6 inches of colorful ribbon, any width
- Spool of fine-gauge gray floral wire
- Floral picks
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

What You Do

1 Lightly spray the stems of German statice with black acrylic paint and allow the paint to dry thoroughly. Then use scissors to cut the statice into 2½-inch-long sprigs.

2 Cover the crimped-wire wreath base by wrapping it with green floral tape.

3 Using the chenille stem or the medium-gauge floral wire, fashion a hanger for the wreath (see "Hangers" on page 118 for instructions). To help you keep track of the hanger as you construct the wreath, tie the ribbon to the hanger loop.

4 Group the 2½-inch-long German statice sprigs into small clusters of five sprigs each and, using the fine-gauge floral wire, carefully wire each cluster to the wrapped wreath base. Work in one direction only, layering the clusters so that the blossom ends of each cluster cover the stem ends of the previous cluster.

5 Sort the winged everlastings into 12 clusters of five stems each and attach a floral pick to each cluster. Hot-glue the picked clusters in six pairs around the wreath base, attaching the pairs to form fans that arch across the width of the wreath.

6 To create the wreath's wispy effect, hot-glue the stalks of oat and the wheat straws to the wreath base, arranging them as shown in the photograph to extend into the center of the wreath and beyond its confines.

7 For additional texture, hot-glue the daisies and strawflowers around the wreath.

8 Using the photograph as a guide, hot-glue the guinea fowl feathers in place. Then cut the money-plant pods from the branch and hot-glue them around the wreath. Finally, hot-glue the false-indigo pods around the paired clusters of winged everlastings.

For additional information and projects using feathers, *see "Floral Arrangements" on page 101, "Floral Supplies" on page 115, and "Gourds" on page 131.*

FLORAL ARRANGEMENTS

Arranging flowers is an art form, no doubt about it, but it's not an impossible one to learn. In this section, you'll find some general guidelines for beginners as well as tips for more experienced floral crafters. If you're just starting out, make a special effort to trust your own instincts. Don't let the guidelines offered here stifle your imagination!

Arrangements—and their containers—may take many forms. Your first step will be to pinpoint the visual function that you'd like your finished floral arrangement to serve. Decide where you want to display it and think about the mood that you'd like it to convey. Will it be viewed from one side only, or will all sides be visible? Would you like the colors of the arrangement and the vase to be muted or bright?

The "Cloisonné Vase Arrangement" shown on page 106 was designed to be placed on a low corner shelf and to provide both color and height against an expanse of blank wall. It is viewed from the front only. If this same arrangement were placed on a dining-room table, it would only serve to hide the diners from each other, and you'd only be providing one of those diners with a pretty view!

Shapes for floral arrangements include vertical, round, and fanlike; designs that arch to one side or the other; symmetrical and asymmetrical designs; and arrangements based on an S-shaped curve. As you begin to imagine your arrangement's shape, select a container that will complement it. In general, materials in the finished project should be one and one-half to two times the height and width of the container. Be sure, too, to select a container that is not so unusual or brightly colored that it will distract the viewer's attention from the natural materials.

The "Designer Tips" on page 102 should get you off to a great start. Read them carefully, make a few rough sketches to help focus your attention on the floral vision you have in mind, and gather your tools, supplies, and materials before you start.

The Victorian Language of Flowers

Victorian floral arrangers sometimes chose flowers with symbolic meanings to create attractive, message-bearing nosegays.

Artemisia	Constancy
Baby's-breath	Happiness
Bay	Glory
Boxwood	Endurance
Calendula	Decision to go to the very end
Chamomile	Patience
Cockscomb	Affection
Everlasting	Never-ceasing remembrance
Geranium	Spiritual happiness, calmness
Globe amaranth	Preference
Hyssop	Loving sacrifice
Ivy	The love of God
Lavender	Luck, devotion, chastity
Lemon balm	Comfort
Lemon verbena	Herb of Venus; unity
Magnolia	Dignity
Marjoram	Joy
Mint	Eternal refreshment, virtue
Money plant	Money in your pocket
Oregano	Substance
Parsley	Festivity
Pinks	Pure affection
Rose	Love
Rosemary	Remembrance
Sage	Wisdom, esteem
Salad burnet	A merry heart
Savory	Interest
Spearmint	Warm feelings
Tarragon	Lasting interest
Thyme	Courage
Yarrow	Dreams of a loved one

Designer Tips

AS YOU WORK ON AN ARRANGEMENT, position the vase or container at a comfortable height. Using a high countertop or table will help you avoid back strain. For round arrangements, a lazy Susan will also come in handy; by placing the vase or container on it, you'll find it an easy matter to view your arrangement from every perspective. To check your arrangement as it takes shape, place it in its actual display location for a minute or two. Stand back to gauge the effect you're creating, return the arrangement to your work surface, and make adjustments as necessary.

WHEN YOU'RE WORKING WITH DRIED MATERIALS, you may want to fill your container with cut pieces of dry floral foam so that the inserted stems will be held securely in position. To disguise any portions of foam that are likely to be visible when the arrangement has been completed, cover the foam with moss. Or if your dried materials are heavier than your container, fill the bottom third of the container with sand or rocks before starting.

ARRANGEMENTS ARE USUALLY STARTED by creating an outline with the tallest materials. Other materials, which provide color and texture, are then added one at a time to fill in the design.

MANY FLORAL DESIGNERS ADD MATERIALS IN "TRIANGLES." That is, they position dried or fresh flowers in sets of three so that the completed arrangement consists of a series of visual triangles, each of which is placed in a different position and some of which overlap.

KEEP IN MIND THAT darker colors, large blooms, and dense foliage will appear heavier than pale colors, small blooms, and fine-textured foliage. Round shapes hold attention, and spiky shapes lead the eye away. Your goal is to create an arrangement that first catches the viewer's attention at one focal point and then leads that attention throughout the display. In general, you should place larger, darker materials toward the center and base of your arrangement and smaller, lighter materials at the edges.

WHEN WORKING WITH FRESH FLOWERS, pick them either early or late in the day. Strip the lowest leaves from the stems and use a sharp knife to cut the stems at an angle. Then place the stems in warm water and allow them to stand for an hour or two. When you're ready to start your arrangement, fill your display container with a solution of flower preservative and water and recut the stems before placing them in the solution. You should avoid submerging the leaves and crowding the stems, or your finished arrangement may develop mold.

TO REVIVE WILTING BLOOMS, remove the stems from the arrangement and recut them at an angle while holding them under water; this will release any air in them—air which might otherwise block the intake of water. Then place the recut stems in warm water and leave them for a few hours before rearranging them.

Warm colors, like those in this rounded arrangement, are emphasized when set off against paler greens and grays.

Basket Arrangement

What You Need

2 large handfuls of sphagnum moss

9 stems of dried 'Silver King' artemisia, 17 to 20 inches long

15 stems of dried mountain mint, 14 to 17 inches long

8 sprigs of baby's-breath, 12 to 16 inches long

8 stems of dried goldenrod, 11 to 14 inches long

9 stems of dried purple statice, 11 to 14 inches long

8 stems of dried red cockscomb, 9 to 12 inches long

7 stems of dried roses, 14 to 17 inches long

Basket, 6½ inches deep and 8 inches in diameter

Several sheets of newspaper

Serrated knife

1 block of dry floral foam

Spray bottle filled with water

Pruning shears

Green floral tape

Heavy-gauge floral wire

Wire cutters

WHAT YOU DO

1 If your basket is loosely woven, line the bottom with newspaper to confine any shedding materials. Then use the serrated knife to cut sections of dry floral foam to fit inside the basket.

2 Insert the foam pieces into the basket until they fit snugly enough to hold each other firmly inside. Note that the foam should not protrude above the top of the basket.

3 Completely cover the foam with sphagnum moss, using the knife to tuck it in securely around the edges of the basket.

4 To form the design outline for your arrangement and to provide its predominant background color, start with the feathery stems of 'Silver King' artemisia. First strip all leaves from the lower portion of each stem. Then mist the stems lightly with water to prevent the remaining leaves from crumbling as you handle them. Select several relatively tall stems, cut each stem end at an angle, and insert the cut stems into the foam at the center of the basket. Then cut and insert the remaining stems, working out toward the basket edge from front to back and from side to side, shortening the stem lengths as you move toward the edges. This will create a rounded effect in the completed arrangement. Be sure to aim every stem end toward an invisible center point in the middle of the basket so that the stems angle out toward the edges of the basket.

5 To give the arrangement both body and fragrance, insert the stems of mountain mint next. Again, place the tallest stems toward the center of the basket and the shorter ones out toward the edges, aiming them at the invisible center point as you insert them.

6 Complete the arrangement by inserting, in this order, the baby's-breath (for a light, feminine touch), the goldenrod (its yellow color will draw the eye), the purple statice (for its color), and the red cockscomb. You will need to fortify the weak stems of the cockscomb by using green floral tape to secure a length of heavy-gauge floral wire to each stem. Use the same technique to strengthen any weak stems of other materials as well.

Cloisonné Vase Arrangement

When deciding on materials for your arrangement, select those that complement or even duplicate the colors of the container. A good match will be evident—here, even though the vase is quite distinctive, the floral materials are so well matched that the result is a single, attractive display.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 7 stems of dried fibigia, 22 inches long
- 3 stems of dried yellow giant hyssop, 7 to 22 inches long
- 5 dried crocosmia flower pods, with stems 10 to 16 inches long
- 2 dried crocosmia leaves, 10 inches long
- 7 stems of dried Mexican sage, 10 to 20 inches long
- 5 stems of dried red plumed celosia, 10 to 20 inches long
- 9 stems of dried blue larkspur, 6 to 18 inches long
- 10 dried love-in-a-mist pods, with stems 5 to 15 inches long
- 7 stems of dried lemon bergamot, 5 to 15 inches long
- 36 stems of dried yellow cotton lavender, 5 to 22 inches long
- 4 stalks of dried bamboo, 10 to 26 inches long
- 1 branch of dried curly willow, 26 inches long
- 2 stems of dried horsetail, 20 to 26 inches long
- 2 stems of dried sea holly, 10 inches long
- 1 stem of mountain mint, 5 inches long
- Vase, 12 inches tall, in colors to complement the floral materials
- Several handfuls of dry sand
- Spool of medium-gauge floral wire
- Wire cutters
- Green floral tape
- Scissors

Note: You may find that some of the materials used in this project are difficult to find. Don't quit before you begin! Just substitute materials with similar textures and colors.

What You Do

1 To prevent the vase from tipping over after the dried materials have been placed in it, fill the bottom third of the vase with dry sand.

2 Using the photograph as a guide, create a fanlike outline for your design by arranging the stems of fibigia in the vase. Then add the stems of giant hyssop to provide substantial height to the design and to draw the eye toward the center of the vase.

3 Insert the stems of crocosmia pods and the crocosmia leaves to create an airy line cascading from the center of the arrangement.

4 Insert the stems of Mexican sage next, followed by the plumed celosia. Both should reinforce the fan shape. Then add the larkspur, which picks up the blue color in the vase and strengthens the linear quality of the arrangement.

5 Insert the stems of love-in-a-mist pods and lemon bergamot to soften the arrangement's lines.

6 Before inserting the stems of yellow cotton lavender, sort them into clusters of three to four stems each, placing stems of similar lengths in each cluster. Reinforce each cluster with a straight length of medium-gauge floral wire, wrapping the wire and stems with floral tape. Trim the stems and wires as necessary before inserting the wired clusters into the arrangement. With their bright yellow blooms, these clusters will lighten and brighten the colors of the arrangement, accentuate the yellows and golds in the vase, and bring the eye to the vertical line in the center of the design. (Just for fun, hold your hand up to hide the yellow buttons. Makes you realize how much that touch of yellow is needed, doesn't it?)

7 Insert the horsetails, the sea holly, and the mountain mint.

8 Turn the vase around 180 degrees and insert the stalks of bamboo. Turn the arrangement back around to face you and insert the branch of curly willow to create a distinctive element of both height and width. This will serve as an initial eye-catcher for your completed arrangement. Note that even though this arrangement is intended to be viewed from the front, no holes should be left in its sides or back.

Decorative Crate Arrangement

WHAT YOU NEED

Several handfuls of sheet moss

18 stems of dried anise hyssop, 11 to 13 inches long

21 stems of dried globe amaranth, 10 inches long

30 stems of dried artemisia, 9 inches long

20 stems of dried white oregano, 8 inches long

10 stems of dried red templetonia, 7 inches long

30 stems of dried Mexican bush sage, 6 to 7 inches long

72 sprigs of dried pearly everlasting, 5 inches long

15 stems of cockscomb, 1½ inches long

Tape measure

Rectangular container, about 3½ × 4½ × 12 inches

Serrated knife

1 block of dry floral foam

Floral pins

Wire cutters

Spool of medium-gauge floral wire

Green floral tape

WHAT YOU DO

1 Measure the inside dimensions of your rectangular container. Then subtract ½ inch from the interior width and ½ inch from the interior length. Add 1 inch to the height. Using the serrated knife, cut the block of dry floral foam to these dimensions.

Many craft-supply stores carry attractive wooden containers as well as twig and woven baskets, but keep your eyes peeled at garage sales and flea markets, too!

2 Use the sheet moss to cover the foam that will be visible once the foam is placed into the container. If your container—like the one in the photograph—can be seen through, wrap the entire foam block in sheet moss. Insert several floral pins to hold the sheet moss in place and place the foam in the container.

3 You will need to create wired clusters with several of the materials. Starting with the globe amaranth, use medium-gauge floral wire and floral tape to make seven wired clusters with three stems each. Then make eight wired clusters of

artemisia, each with three or four stems. Also make 12 clusters of pearly everlasting, with six sprigs each.

4 The fragile stems of the Mexican bush sage must also be reinforced with medium-gauge floral wire and floral tape. Gather some stems into clusters before wiring them and wire the others as single stems.

5 As you create this arrangement, you'll be working from the back toward the front, inserting horizontal rows of dried herbs, one at a time. Each row wraps around the ends of the row just behind it to create a three-dimensional surface effect (see Figure 1). Start by inserting the stems of anise hyssop; leave about 2 inches at each end of the row so the next row of materials can be wrapped around.

6 Using Figure 1 as a placement guide, insert the remaining materials, one row at a time. Be sure to wrap each row around the edges of the preceding row.

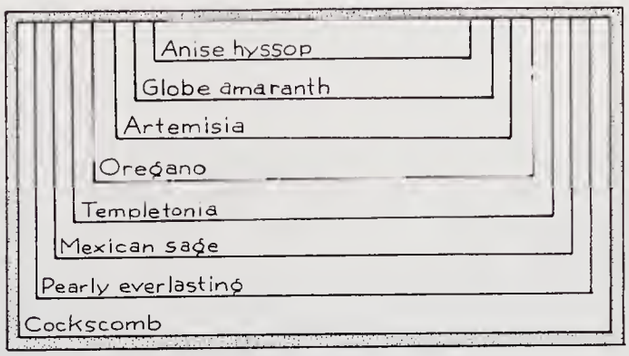


Figure 1

Miniature Floral Arrangements

Glass Vase Arrangement

What You Need

15 stems of dried Mexican bush sage, 7 to 10 inches long

3 stems of dried lavender statice, 7 inches long

2 stems of dried white statice, 7 to 8 inches long

11 stems of dried pink statice, 4 to 9 inches long

1 yard of rose satin ribbon, ¼ inch wide

1 yard of pink satin ribbon, ¼ inch wide

Glass vase, 5 inches tall

Scissors

Dainty dried flower arrangements add a special touch when scattered throughout the house or perched on a guest's tea tray.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Place the two lengths of ribbon back to back, and use the doubled lengths to tie a single bow around the narrow neck of the vase. Cut the ribbon ends to the desired lengths.

2 Arrange all the dried materials to make a single bouquet, placing the tallest pieces toward the center and back and adding the shorter pieces around and in front of them. Insert the bouquet into the vase.

Sugar Bowl Arrangement

WHAT YOU NEED

1 handful of sheet moss

5 stems of dried pink larkspur, 1½ to 5 inches long

12 sprigs of dried caspia, 4 inches long

10 stems of dried lavender, 1½ to 3 inches long

1 dried blue hydrangea flower head

3 stems of dried red roses, 1½ to 2½ inches long

3 dried rose leaves

Serrated knife

Dry floral foam

Sugar bowl

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Floral picks

Scissors

WHAT YOU DO

1 Using the serrated knife, cut the dry floral foam to fit snugly inside the sugar bowl. Insert the foam into the bowl and disguise its upper surface by hot-gluing the sheet moss to it. Use the knife to tuck the edges of the moss between the foam and bowl.

2 Attach floral picks to two of the longest stems of pink larkspur. Insert these into the foam in the center of the sugar bowl.

3 Combining the caspia and the lavender, make four small clusters, each a different length. Attach a floral pick to each cluster. Then insert the clusters into the foam, varying their angles.

4 Gently divide the hydrangea flower head into small pieces and hot-glue these to the caspia, varying the placement heights and angles, as shown in the photograph on page 109.

5 Insert the longest rose stem next to the larkspur and hot-glue it in place. Then insert and hot-glue another rose stem next to it.

6 Hot-glue the remaining pink larkspur into the arrangement, placing a few stems in front of the two roses.

7 Hot-glue the last rose in place, near the other roses, toward the front of the arrangement. Finally, hot-glue the rose leaves next to the two roses in the front of the arrangement.

China Vase Arrangement

WHAT YOU NEED

1 handful of sheet moss

15 sprigs of baby's-breath, 2 to 4½ inches long

2 stems of dried blue delphinium, 3 inches long

Serrated knife

Dry floral foam

China vase, 4 inches tall

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Scissors

Floral picks

What You Do

1 Using the serrated knife, cut a piece of dry floral foam to fit inside the vase with ½ inch of foam protruding from the top of the vase. Insert the foam into the vase and then hot-glue the sheet moss to the foam's upper surface. Tuck the edges of the moss between the vase and the foam or trim the edges off completely.

2 Group the sprigs of baby's-breath into five small clusters and attach a floral pick to each one. Insert the tallest cluster in the center of the moss-covered foam and the remaining clusters throughout.

3 Cut the delphinium buds off the stems and hot-glue them throughout the arrangement.

Pottery mugs, creamers, and even candlesticks make convenient and attractive containers for miniature floral arrangements.

Pottery Mug Arrangement

What You Need

1 handful of sheet moss

15 stems of dried brome or other grass, 3 to 7 inches long

19 sprigs of dried white winged everlasting, 2 to 4 inches long

21 stems of dried statice, 2 to 4 inches long

7 dried ivy leaves

Serrated knife

Dry floral foam

Mug, 3½ inches tall

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Scissors

Floral picks

WHAT YOU DO

1 Using the serrated knife, cut the floral foam to 4½ inches in height, shaping it to fit tightly into the mug. Insert the foam into the mug. Hot-glue the sheet moss to the foam's upper edges and trim away the moss edges.

2 Insert the three longest pieces of brome into the center of the foam. Set aside a few sprigs of winged everlasting and a few stems of statice. Then group the remaining brome, winged everlasting, and statice into seven clusters, with the tallest stems of each in a single cluster. Attach a floral pick to each cluster and then insert the picks into the moss-covered foam, sloping the flowers gently down toward the rim of the mug.

3 Hot-glue three ivy leaves around the rim of the mug, taking care to vary their angles. Hot-glue the remaining ivy leaves throughout the arrangement.

4 Hot-glue the remaining winged everlasting and statice around the rim, angling some downward to soften the edges of the design.

Pottery Creamer Arrangement

WHAT YOU NEED

1 handful of sheet moss

44 sprigs of dried sweet Annie, 2 to 4½ inches long

22 stems of dried goldenrod, 2 to 4½ inches long

11 stems of dried black-eyed Susans, 1½ inches long

5 dried ivy leaves

Serrated knife

Dry floral foam

Pottery creamer, 3½ inches tall

Floral picks

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

WHAT YOU DO

1 Using the serrated knife, cut the dry floral foam to 4¾ inches in height, shaping it to fit inside the creamer with 1¼ inches protruding from the top of the creamer. Insert the foam into the creamer. Hot-glue the sheet moss to cover the foam and use the knife to tuck the edges of the moss between the foam and creamer.

2 Group the sprigs of sweet Annie and goldenrod into 11 small mixed clusters, varying the cluster lengths from 2 to 4½ inches. Attach a floral pick to each cluster.

3 To create a framework for your design, first insert the tallest cluster into the center of the moss-covered foam. Insert four or five of the remaining clusters next, placing the shortest near the rim. Finally, insert the last clusters to fill in the design. The completed arrangement should curve downward from its high point in the center. (If you have any leftover pieces of goldenrod, hot-glue them, at a downward angle, around the rim.)

4 Insert the black-eyed Susans throughout the arrangement, making sure to place a few near the rim. Hot-glue the ivy leaves throughout, varying their angles.

Pottery Candlestick Arrangement

What You Need

1 handful of sheet moss

25 stems of dried pink statice, 4 to 5 inches long

25 stems of dried white statice, 4 to 5 inches long

46 stems of dried oregano, 3 to 4 inches long

9 sprigs of dried pink pepperberries, 2 to 3½ inches long

7 dried ivy leaves

Serrated knife

Dry floral foam

Pottery candlestick, 6 inches tall

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Scissors

Floral picks

What You Do

1 Using the serrated knife, cut the dry floral foam to 7 inches in height. Then shape it to fit securely into the candlestick. Insert the foam and hot-glue the sheet moss on top of it. Trim away the edges of the moss.

2 Using 17 stems of pink statice, 17 stems of white statice, and 30 stems of oregano, make 6 small clusters of mixed materials. Attach a floral pick to each cluster.

3 Insert the picked clusters into the moss-covered foam, placing the tallest in the center and working downward and outward with the remaining clusters. You may need to remove some stems from their picks, cut the stems shorter, and reattach the picks in order to get the desired effect.

4 Hot-glue the remaining statice and oregano around the rim of the arrangement. Vary the bloom angles for a three-dimensional look.

5 Hot-glue the two longest sprigs of pepperberries on either side of the rim, draping the berries so they hang down. Then hot-glue the remaining sprigs throughout the arrangement. Hot-glue the ivy leaves throughout.

Copper Tea Kettle Arrangement

Don't be timid about using nontraditional containers for your floral arrangements—your kitchen is probably filled with potential "vases" like this copper kettle.

WHAT YOU NEED

85 sprigs of dried sweet Annie, 4 inches long

13 stems of dried purple statice, 1½ to 5 inches long

10 dried zinnia blooms, 1 to 2½ inches in diameter

6 stems of dried button dahlias, 1½ to 2 inches long

Copper tea kettle

Several sheets of newspaper

Serrated knife

Dry floral foam

Floral picks

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

WHAT YOU DO

1 Fill the kettle with crumpled newspaper. Using the serrated knife, cut the dry floral foam to fit tightly into the opening of the kettle, shaping it to extend 1½ inches above the opening.

2 Divide the sweet Annie into 17 clusters, each containing five sprigs. Attach a floral pick to each cluster.

3 Insert the picked clusters into the foam, starting in the center and gradually creating an arrangement that slopes downward and outward. Be careful not to hide the handle of the kettle.

4 Hot-glue the purple statice throughout the arrangement, inserting a few of the stems in pairs. Then, using the photograph as a guide, hot-glue the zinnias in place, arranging them at different angles and varying the placement of different sizes. Finally, hot-glue the dahlias throughout the arrangement.

Note: For instructions on reinforcing stems and clusters with floral wire and floral tape, see "Floral Supplies" on the opposite page.

FLORAL SUPPLIES

Experienced nature crafters make their lives easier by keeping a few supplies on hand. From picks designed especially for wreath-making to wet and dry floral foam for floral arrangements, these supplies are widely available from craft-supply stores, florists, and mail-order companies. Wreath bases, perhaps the most important of supplies, are covered in a separate section (see "Bases" on page 15).

Dry Floral Foam

Dry floral foam is a dry, dense, semi-rigid foam material. Available in preshaped wreath bases and in large blocks, this foam may be cut to any shape or size with a serrated knife. Stem ends, floral picks, and floral pins inserted into the foam are held securely in position by the foam itself.

Wet Floral Foam

Wet floral foam is similar to dry floral foam but is spongelike and water absorbent. It is usually inserted into vases or other display containers for fresh floral arrangements. Available in large blocks and in preformed shapes, it can easily be cut into different shapes and sizes with a serrated knife and will hold inserted materials with ease. The foam should be watered regularly to keep the foliage and flowers fresh.

Commercial wet floral foam bases usually come with a waterproof backing. If you're using this foam in an arrangement that is not protected within a waterproof container, it's wise to place a piece of glass or acrylic between the backing and the surface upon which it rests or to cover the backing with waterproof plastic.

Most wet floral foam is green in color. If you'd prefer that the foam not show in your completed project, disguise its surface with picked or wired materials.

Polystyrene Foam

The least expensive wreath bases are those made from white plastic extruded foam, such as Styrofoam. Wrap these bases with sheet moss or ribbon before attaching materials to them, or their color may distract from the effects of your completed wreaths.

Floral Pins

Also known as floral prongs, these U-shaped pieces of wire (see Figure 1) look like elongated staples and are used to attach materials to straw or foam wreath bases or to floral foam. Position the materials to be fastened on the straw or foam, place the pin with its pointed ends on either side of the materials, and push the pin into the straw or foam at an angle.

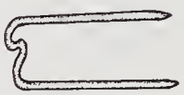


Figure 1

Floral pins are available from craft-supply stores and florists. They are green or silver in color. Select a shade that will complement the colors of your materials.

Floral Tape

Floral tape has four purposes: to strengthen the weak stems of small clusters that have been wired to floral picks; to reinforce or lengthen individual stems; to disguise unsightly stems or wires; and to cover wire wreath bases and the pieces of floral wire used to secure and fasten bows. This thin, elastic tape, which is mildly adhesive when stretched, comes in several colors—green and brown are the most popular. A stronger, wider version, sometimes referred to as adhesive floral wrapping tape, is also available.

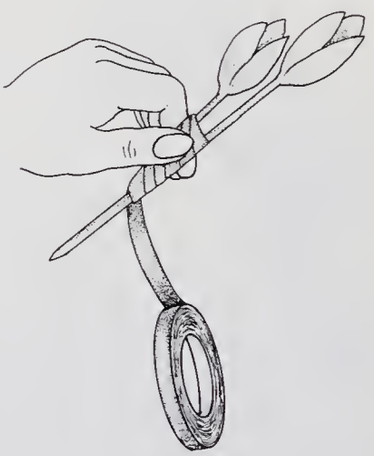


Figure 2

To use floral tape, simply stretch it slightly as you work with it, overlapping the tape slightly and winding it down to conceal the materials underneath (see Figure 2). Floral tape may also be twisted tightly to form an attractive, flexible wire.

For fresh-flower projects and others that may be exposed to water, purchase wet/dry floral tape, which is made to withstand the effects of moisture.

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Floral Picks

A floral pick is a small wooden stick with a taper at one end and a length of fine-gauge wire attached to the other (see Figure 3 on page 115). Usually sold in bundles, the picks are used to strengthen or lengthen fragile stems and to bind clusters of stems together before attaching them to a base or inserting them into an arrangement.

While the stems of some materials are sturdy enough to insert directly into floral foam or straw and foam bases, others are simply too fragile. To test stem strength, insert a stem into a scrap of dry floral foam. If the stem breaks, you'll need to reinforce it with a floral pick, with floral wire, or with both.

Fastening a Floral Pick to an Individual Stem

First cut the stem to the desired length. Then place the pick next to it, leaving about 1 inch of pick extending past the stem end (see Figure 4). Wrap the wire two or three times around the stem and the top of the pick. Then wrap the wire downward in spiral fashion.

Floral picks differ in thickness; the longer the pick, the thicker and sturdier it will be. To provide extra reinforcement for fragile, short-stemmed materials, select a long, thick pick and whittle it down to the appropriate length before wiring it to the stem.

Fastening a Floral Pick to a Cluster of Stems

Attach picks to clustered stems just as you would attach them to individual stems (see Figure 5). Because stems vary in thickness, no absolute rule exists regarding the number of stems that can be picked as a single cluster. You're likely to find, however, that a single pick works well with three to five stems. When working with especially delicate stems, you may also need to reinforce the picked stem or stems with floral tape (see Figure 6).

Sometimes, when a cluster of materials is especially large, a single pick may not do the job. What to do? Just attach a second pick for additional support.

Fastening Picked Materials to Wreath Bases

Picked materials are easy to insert into floral foam, straw and extruded foam bases, and tightly woven vine bases. Take care when inserting picks into floral foam; if you insert the picks too close to one another, your base may disintegrate. (You may need to reinforce a picked item with a dab of hot glue, depending upon its weight and the density of the foam.) To attach picks to loosely woven vine bases, simply hot-glue the picks in place.

Floral Wire

Floral wire is an indispensable nature-craft supply (see Figure 7). Available in either precut lengths or on spools, this wire comes in brown, green, or silver and in a variety of thicknesses (known as gauges). For use with lightweight materials, select the more flexible fine gauges. When working with heavier materials, less flexible, heavy-gauge wires will provide additional strength.

Precut lengths of floral wire are most often used in conjunction with floral tape to lengthen and strengthen stems and to attach single items to wire and vine wreath bases. When used to attach items to a base, floral wire has one distinct advantage over hot glue: Because you don't have to work quickly when you use the wire, you can experiment with the placement of materials for as long as you like!

Lengthening and Strengthening Stems with Floral Wire

To lengthen or strengthen a fragile hollow stem, cut a piece of floral wire about 2 inches longer than you'd like the stem to be. Thread the wire firmly but gently through the length of the existing stem and up through the center of the flower. Make a small, U-shaped bend at the top of the wire and then pull it back into the flower so that the hooked end of the wire is hidden (see Figure 8). The wired stem may be inserted directly into a foam or

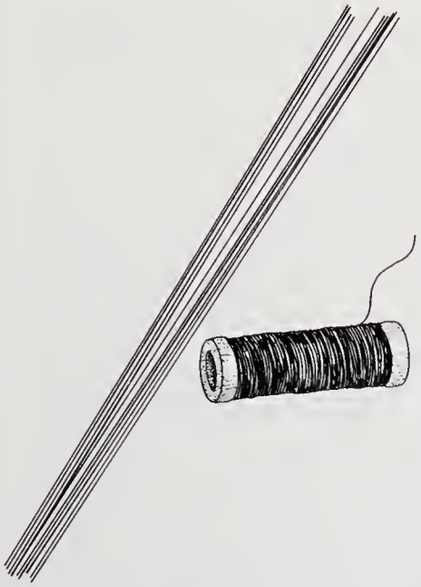


Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

straw base or, if it will be visible in the finished project, wrapped with floral tape before insertion.

Another way to lengthen and strengthen a stem is to reinforce its length with floral wire and floral tape. Cut a length of wire about 2 inches longer than the required stem length. Position the wire along the length of the existing stem and wrap the wire and stem together by spiraling floral tape down their combined lengths (see Figure 9). Trim the wire to the desired length before insertion.

Attaching Materials with Floral Wire

To fasten stems to a straw wreath base, it's easiest to work with small clusters and a spool of floral wire. Gather the stems together, position them along the wreath base, and attach them to the base by wrapping the floral wire around the base and the stems (see Figure 10). Without cutting the wire from the spool, wire another cluster onto the base so that its blooms overlap the stems of the first cluster. Continue attaching clusters until the wreath base is covered. Don't cut the wire from the spool until you're finished.

Larger items may also be wired to all types of bases, but you may find it necessary to bore small holes in materials, such as dried fruits, in order to string the wire through the material. (See "Cones, Pods, & Nuts" on page 53 for instructions on how to attach wires to large cones and pods.)

Floral Tubes

If you'd like to use fresh flowers or foliage in a wreath, garland, or swag, you'll need to purchase clear plastic floral tubes (see Figure 11). Available from florists and craft-supply stores, the tubes are either flat or tapered at one end and have removable caps with small openings in them at the other.

To use a floral tube, first cut the stem of your flower or leaf to a length slightly shorter than the length of the tube. Remove the cap from the tube, fill the tube with water, replace the cap, and insert the stem through the slit in the cap. Floral tubes may be inserted between the strands of loosely woven vine bases. If your base is foam or straw, hot-glue the tube in place. In either case, disguise visible portions of the tubes by covering them with natural materials or with decorative accents, such as bows.

Keep in mind that fresh materials will "drink" the water in the tube within an hour or two. If the tube isn't glued in place, simply remove it to refill it. Hot-glued tubes will need to be refilled while they're still attached. When the flowers and foliage finally wilt, replace them with

Figure 10

Figure 11

fresh materials. Floral tubes are not always watertight, so be careful when you select a location for your finished project.

Hangers

Nothing is more frustrating to the nature crafter than completing a gorgeous wreath or swag only to realize that there is no mechanism for hanging it. It is so simple to make hangers for your projects that it's a good idea to get in the habit of doing it as the very first step. You can fashion hangers for wreaths, swags, and garlands by using floral wire or chenille stems (commonly known as pipe cleaners).

To make a hanger for a wreath, form a loop in the center of a 10- or 12-inch length of medium-gauge floral wire or a 12-inch-long chenille stem by twisting it together (see Figure 12). You may want to wrap the floral wire with floral tape first to give the wire a finished appearance. Then wrap the wire or stem around the wreath base and twist the two ends together (see Figure 13). Often, after you hang the wreath, you'll be able to hide the wire by gently curving a flower stem or leaf in front of it.

Figure 12

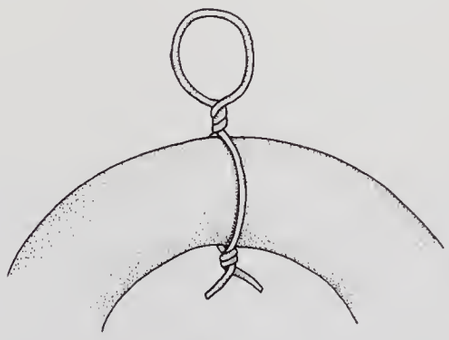


Figure 13

You can modify this same approach with a swag or garland that has a narrow, horizontal center. You will need several hangers for a long garland. If you want the garland to drape in two or more curves, place a hanger at the peak between every two curves (see Figure 14). If your swag is vertical, you can make the hanger as you construct the swag. When you wire the stems of the flowers or foliage together with medium-gauge floral wire, leave an extra 10 inches or so of wire. Fashion the extra length of wire into a loop, twist the wire end around the wire that is wrapping the stems, and trim the excess wire with wire cutters (see Figure 15).

Figure 14

If you are using a foam or straw base, you can make a hanger that is mounted on the back of the base and is therefore completely hidden from view. Fashion a loop from a 6-inch length of floral wire by twisting the ends together and trimming the excess wire. Identify the place on the back of the base near the top where you want the hanger to be and pierce the foam or straw with the end of the hanger. Remove the wire loop, place a dab of hot glue on the end of the wire, and reinsert it into the base. Then position a floral pin with its prongs on either side of the hanger and press the pin into the base (see Figure 16).

Figure 15

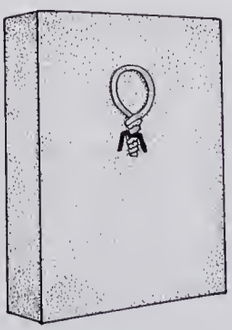


Figure 16

For more information on using floral supplies, *see "Bases" on page 15 and "Tools" on page 208.*

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

When novice crafters use natural materials, they often limit themselves to flowers and herbs. While these materials are abundant and easily accessible, there are many projects that even urban crafters can make using items purchased from the grocery store. Fruits and vegetables make wonderful arrangements and garlands and are often used as accents in floral projects as well.

It's relatively easy to dry and preserve fruits and vegetables at home (see "Drying" on page 72). But if you'd rather not try your hand at home-drying, look in your local craft shop for dried and fresh materials. Your grocery store is likely to stock a wide variety of miniature pumpkins and gourds during the autumn, and it carries fresh fruits or vegetables year-round. While fresh materials won't last forever, they'll add vibrant color and enliven any arrangement. When selecting fresh materials, always make sure that the materials are as fresh as possible and without blemishes of any kind.

To make fresh fruit and vegetables last longer, pour some acrylic floor wax into an old coffee tin or deep pan. Dip the fruit into the wax, remove it, shake it dry, and drain it on a paper bag. Store the wax, which can be reused many times, in a tightly sealed container. (Do be sure that any children in your household are warned never to eat wax-covered fruit.)

When your arrangement starts to look a little less than fresh, just remove the offending parties and replace them with new ones!

Fall Fruit & Vegetable Arrangement

Decorate with an arrangement that's a bit out of the ordinary—fill a basket with fruits and vegetables instead of floral materials.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 1 piece of Spanish moss to fit the basket opening (the opening of the basket shown in the photo is 5½ × 11½ inches)
- 1 fresh red apple
- 1 fresh pear
- 1 dried miniature pumpkin
- 3 garlic bulbs with the stems braided together
- 3 dried miniature ears of corn
- 3 dried okra pods, one 8 inches long and two 5½ inches long
- 4 dried quince slices
- 4 stems of dried chili peppers, 3 with 4 or 5 peppers per stem and 1 with 2 peppers per stem
- 1 dried chili pepper without the stem
- 1 dried miniature sunflower
- Basket, any size
- 2 sheets of crumpled newspaper
- 8 inches of heavy-gauge floral wire

WHAT YOU DO

1 Have fun! If you'd rather select other fresh fruits and vegetables for this arrangement, go right ahead. Open your refrigerator and grab a variety of fresh items in different shapes, sizes, and colors. Oranges, lemons, artichokes, carrots, and onions all look terrific in an arrangement.

2 Make a nest in the basket by filling it almost to the top with crumpled newspapers. Then cover the newspapers with moss, tucking in the edges well.

3 Using the photo as a guide, arrange the heaviest materials—the apple, pear, and pumpkin—at various angles on top of

the moss. Anchor the garlic bulbs in place by tucking the braided stems under the moss and the pear.

4 Using the heavy-gauge floral wire, connect two of the ears of corn together at their cob ends, leaving a length of wire protruding to insert into the arrangement. Stick this wire into the moss and newspapers, bending it as necessary to drape one of the ears over the front edge of the basket and the other over the edge toward the basket's back. Insert the third ear of corn behind the apple.

5 Place two pieces of okra—one long and one short—near the back of the basket. Insert the third piece in front of the apple.

6 Position the quince slices throughout the arrangement, placing at least one against the back of the basket and angling the others to add visual depth to the arrangement.

7 Using the photo on the opposite page as a guide, insert the chili-pepper stems and the pepper without a stem randomly around the basket arrangement. Insert the sunflower next to the garlic bulbs.

Country Hat

What You Need

23 dried ivy leaves

28 stems of dried chili peppers, 1 pepper per stem

3 garlic bulbs with the stems braided together

1 yard of green paper ribbon, 4 inches wide

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Straw hat

To add a bit of country charm to any wall, decorate a simple straw hat with colorful garden materials.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Tie the paper ribbon into a bow and hot-glue it to the base of the hat. (As you arrange the materials on the hat, remember that this project will look best when it's displayed on a wall.)

2 Starting on either side of the bow, hot-glue the ivy leaves around the rim. Start by placing the two largest leaves next to the bow, arranging them to angle upward around the edges of the hat. As you work toward the top of the hat, vary the leaf sizes and angles. Visualizing the hat as the face of a clock, when you reach the two and ten o'clock positions, start placing the leaves with their tips pointing straight up.

3 Set aside two stems of peppers for Step 5. Hot-glue the remaining stems onto the rim, tucking the stems under the ivy leaves and varying the pepper sizes and angles. Again, work up from either side of the bow.

4 Tuck the braided garlic stems through the bow and hot-glue the braid around the side of the hat so that the bulbs will hang slightly below the bow.

5 Hot-glue the last two stems of peppers between the hat and the bow.

Miniature Chili-Pepper Arrangements

Miniature Chili-Pepper Bottle

WHAT YOU NEED

1 small piece of Spanish moss

5 sprigs of dried sweet Annie, torn into smaller pieces

9 dried strawflowers

11 dried chili peppers

Small glass bottle or vase, 3 inches tall

2 strands of raffia, 20 inches long

Scissors

2 floral picks

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

You won't need a country garden or a closet filled with dried materials to make these fun miniatures!

What You Do

1 Fill the bottle or vase with the Spanish moss. Wrap the two strands of raffia around the top of the bottle twice. Tie the ends into a bow. Using the scissors, cut the streamers to the desired lengths.

2 Gather the sweet Annie pieces into two tiny bundles and wire a floral pick to each one. Insert the picks into the moss. Carefully add hot glue, if necessary, to secure the picks.

3 Hot-glue the strawflowers throughout the sweet Annie, varying the angles for visual interest.

4 Hot-glue the chili peppers throughout the arrangement, varying their placement angles.

Miniature Chili-Pepper Basket

What You Need

1 small piece of Spanish moss

16 miniature hemlock cones

14 dried chili peppers

3 dried ivy leaves

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Miniature basket

What You Do

1 Hot-glue the moss around the inside and the bottom of the basket. Dab a little hot glue onto the bottom of each cone, and working from the edges of the basket toward its center, arrange the cones to cover the moss.

2 Starting at the outer edges of the basket, hot-glue some of the peppers into the basket. Then insert the remaining peppers among the cones in the center of the basket.

3 Hot-glue one ivy leaf in the center of the basket and the other two along the edges of the arrangement.

Miniature Chili-Pepper Swag

What You Need

2 stems of dried sage, 7½ inches long

1 stem of dried chili peppers, 6½ inches long, with 6 peppers

1 stem of dried oregano, 4½ inches long

2 strands of raffia, 20 inches long

Scissors

What You Do

1 Set the sage on a flat surface. Position the stem of chili peppers on top of the sage and the oregano on top of the chili peppers.

2 Wrap the two strands of raffia around the stems twice, about 1 inch from the stem ends. Tie a bow with the raffia. Using the scissors, cut the raffia streamers to the desired lengths.

G GARLANDS

A garland is a long, slender arrangement of natural materials that is usually draped or mounted horizontally over a mantle, doorway, or window. Materials are attached to a spine that is strong enough to support the weight of the materials yet flexible enough to drape easily.

Although garlands are traditionally used as winter holiday decorations, they are now making their appearance year 'round. Fresh flower garlands are a perfect way to celebrate spring and summer events. Dried maple leaves and small ornamental gourds can accent a garland for fall. Thin, delicate garlands can be curved around mirrors, woven through chandeliers, or draped across elegant serving tables.

Because of their length, garlands require a large quantity of materials. So when you plan your garland, be sure to choose materials that you can purchase inexpensively or collect yourself. Sprigs of evergreens, artemisia, or baby's-breath or clusters of pine needles are good items to consider for background materials. Save the rare or costly materials for use as accents.

The two key factors in determining how you will make your garland are where the garland will be placed and the type of materials you want to use. When you've selected the location, you can determine the length of your garland. For example, if you want to mount the garland over your bed, measure the width of the wall space and then add at least 10 inches on both ends so the garland can drape gracefully on either side (see "Rose Garland" on page 129).

Now look at your materials: Are they sturdy, long-stemmed evergreen branches, or delicate and small dried flowers? If your main background material is fir branches, then the branches themselves can serve as the spine. Simply place one branch of fir on top of the stem-end of a second branch and secure the two branches together with medium-gauge floral wire (see Figure 1). Continue to secure the branches together in this way until the garland measures your desired length. Now you can decorate the spine by wiring or hot-gluing pinecones, flowers, or bows directly to the fir spine.

If you are working with dried flowers and herbs or short-stemmed foliage, there are three ways you can create a garland. For all three methods, you will need to trim the stems of your materials to equal lengths and then create clusters of four to eight stems of flowers or foliage.

Cluster Garland

Pull a length of fine-gauge floral wire from a spool and loop it around the stems of each flower cluster several times, but do not cut the wire (see Figure 2). Continue to add flower clusters in the same manner. Each successive cluster should cover and conceal the wire loops from the previous cluster.

Double-Fan Cluster

Use fine-gauge wire to create a large cluster of flowers in a fan shape. Make a second identical cluster. Then secure them together by wiring the stems together (see Figure 3). Wire on a bow or other large novelty to cover the overlapping stems.

Continuous Garland

Use jute rope or heavy-gauge wire to serve as the spine. Cut the spine material about 12 inches longer than the desired length. This will allow the garland to drape and will give you room to tie off the ends after you have attached your materials. Pull a length of fine-gauge floral wire from a spool and secure the

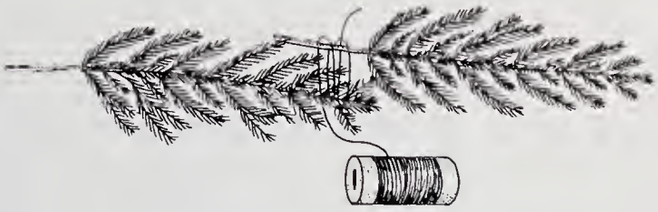


Figure 1

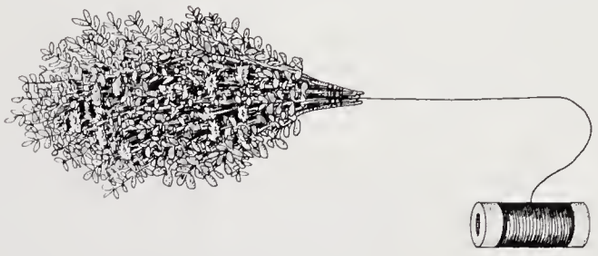


Figure 2

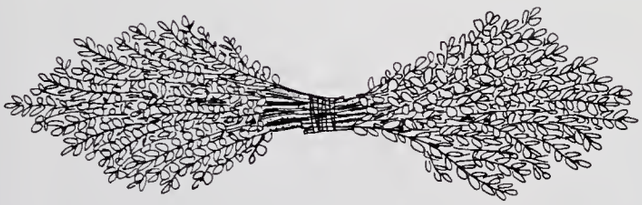


Figure 3

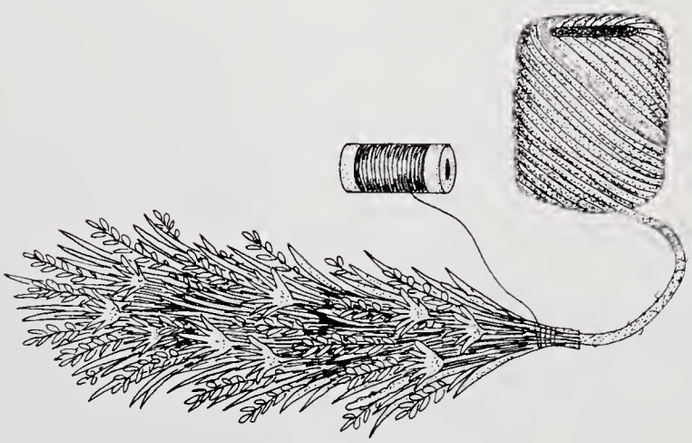


Figure 4

end of the wire to the spine. Loop the floral wire around both the flower cluster stems and the jute or wire spine (see Figure 4). Do not cut the wire. Continue to add flower clusters in the same manner. As with the cluster garland method, each successive cluster should cover the wire loops from the previous cluster.

You can work from one end of the spine to the other, angling the clusters in the same direction. Or you can work from the center toward one end, positioning the clusters so they all point outward, and then create a mirror image by repeating the pattern on the other side. If you use this approach, you will need to wire or hot-glue a bow or a large cluster of flowers to the center of the garland to camouflage the empty place where the two sides originated. Then you can wire or hot-glue your accent materials, such as a ribbon or individual blooms, to the garland.

The three garlands that follow use different types of spines and different methods of attaching the materials.

Welcome guests to your kitchen with the sweet-and-pungent aroma of a culinary garland made of sage, garlic, oregano, and other herbs and flowers.

Culinary Garland

WHAT YOU NEED

36 inches of woven sisal or raffia braid

22 stems of dried sage: four 7 inches long, six 6 inches long, two 4 inches long, and ten 4½ inches long

2 stems of dried catnip, 7 inches long

4 stems of dried feverfew, 7 inches long

7 sprigs of miniature baby's-breath: two 5 inches long, two 6 inches long, and three 3½ inches long

2 stems of dried yellow yarrow, 4 inches long

10 stems of dried oregano blossoms, six 4 inches long and four 3 inches long

3 garlic bulbs

2 dried Chinese lantern blossoms

2 stems of dried anise hyssop, 5 inches long

2 dried yellow yarrow heads

6 dried single feverfew blossoms

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

WHAT YOU DO

1 Hot-glue one 7-inch-long stem of sage and one 7-inch-long stem of catnip onto each end of the braid so that the tips of the herbs extend down about 2 inches onto the fringe of the braid.

2 Working from one end toward the middle of the braid, hot-glue the following materials to the braid in this order: one stem of feverfew, one 5-inch-long sprig of baby's-breath, one 4-inch-long stem of yellow yarrow, and one 7-inch-long stem of sage. Repeat from the opposite end of the braid, again working toward the middle.

3 To each side of the braid, hot-glue three 4-inch-long stems of oregano blossoms and one 6-inch-long stem of baby's-breath. Hot-glue two 6-inch-long stems of sage to each side of the oregano blossoms, then hot-glue one 4-inch-long stem of sage on top of each bunch of baby's-breath.

4 Continue working toward the center of the braid and hot-glue one garlic bulb to each side. Next, hot-glue one 6-inch-long stem of sage to each garlic bulb and hot-glue one Chinese lantern blossom onto each of these stems of sage.

5 Hot-glue one 5-inch-long stem of anise hyssop to the outside of each garlic bulb. Hot-glue two 3-inch-long stems of oregano blossoms near the bottom of each Chinese lantern blossom.

6 Hot-glue one 4½-inch stem of sage below each oregano blossom so that it points toward the inside of the garland. To the outside edge of the oregano blossoms, hot-glue one 4½-inch-long stem of sage. At this point, you should have reached the top of the garland.

7 Hot-glue two heads of yellow yarrow and one garlic bulb to the center top of the garland, referring to the photograph for placement.

8 Hot-glue the remaining six 4½-inch-long stems of sage evenly around the center garlic bulb. Just below the center garlic bulb, hot-glue one 3½-inch-long sprig of baby's-breath. To the top center of the garland, hot-glue two 3½-inch-long sprigs of baby's-breath.

9 To finish the garland, hot-glue three single feverfew blossoms to the top and three more to the bottom of the center garlic bulb.

Swags aren't just for draping over door and window frames. Experiment with different locations for a stunning effect.

Fresh-Flower Garland

What You Need

60 sprigs of fresh caspia, 6 to 8 inches long

60 stems of fresh asparagus fern, 6 to 8 inches long

8 fresh peach roses

3 fresh white roses

6 fresh Peruvian lilies

10 sprigs of dried dark pink pepperberries, 6 inches long

5 feet of heavy-gauge floral wire

Green floral tape

Spool of fine-gauge floral wire

Cool-melt glue gun and glue sticks

10 yards of gold mesh wired ribbon, 2 inches wide

What You Do

1 To make the spine for the garland, wrap the 5-foot length of the heavy-gauge floral wire with the green floral tape.

2 Assemble a cluster of three sprigs of caspia and three sprigs of asparagus fern of various lengths. As described in the "Continuous Garland" method on page 124, wire the cluster to the taped spine with the fine-gauge floral wire. Keep adding clusters of caspia and fern, covering the stems of each cluster with the foliage of the following cluster until you cover the entire spine.

3 Cool-glue four of the peach roses to the center of the garland. Then cool-glue two peach roses evenly on each side of the garland. Cool-glue one white rose in the center of the four peach roses, and one white rose on each side of the garland. Using cool glue, attach one Peruvian lily to each end of the garland and cool-glue the four remaining lilies in a pleasing arrangement elsewhere on the garland.

4 Starting at one end of the garland, use pieces of the fine-gauge floral wire to attach the ribbon to the garland. Loop the ribbon over, in front of, and behind the clusters of roses and lilies; wherever the ribbon loops, you will need to wire it to the base. To add bright splashes of color, cool-glue the sprigs of pepperberries alongside the roses and the lilies.

Rose Garland

Highlight the colors and patterns of wallpaper trim or other home decor with a glamorous garland.

What You Need

92 bundles of dried sweet Annie, 4 to 6 inches long, with about 8 stems per bundle

46 bundles of dried berried eucalyptus, 4 to 6 inches long, with about 4 stems per bundle

23 bundles of dried, light blue larkspur, 4 to 6 inches long, with about 5 stems per bundle

23 bundles of dried, dark blue larkspur, 4 to 6 inches long, with about 5 stems per bundle

36 sprigs of glycerin-preserved juniper, 4 to 6 inches long*

10 large dried pink and/or peach roses

20 small dried pink and/or peach roses

16 dried pink peonies

5 stems of dried hydrangea

15 stems of glycerin-preserved olives, 4 to 6 inches long*

3 large handfuls of Spanish moss

9 feet of heavy, flat electrical wire

Sharp knife

Green floral tape

Black marker

3 green chenille stems, 12 inches long

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

6 yards of pink upholstery cording, 1 inch wide

Ruler

Spool of medium-gauge floral wire

3 pink tassels

*You can purchase glycerin-preserved materials from craft-supply stores and mail-order suppliers, or you can preserve the materials yourself (see "Preserving with Glycerin" on page 78 and "Preserving Leaves" on page 165).

What You Do

1 Find the center of the electrical wire, which will be the garland's spine, and mark it with the knife. Completely wrap the wire with floral tape, being sure to remark the center with the black marker.

2 Starting at one end of the spine, gather together one bundle of the sweet Annie, one bundle of the berried eucalyptus, and one bundle of the larkspur. Wrap this large cluster to the wire spine with floral tape. Be sure that each cluster is full from side to side so that none of the wire shows after it is attached to the spine. Continue attaching the clusters to the wire in the same manner until you reach the center mark. Repeat this process starting at the other end and working toward the center. You will have materials left over—these will be used as fillers in Step 5. Be sure to reserve at least 12 bundles of the sweet Annie, six bundles of the berried eucalyptus, and three bundles of the larkspur for the garland's center medallion.

3 To create hangers, tie one chenille stem around the garland in the center and one on each side, about 18 inches in from the ends. Then lay the garland flat on a large worktable or on the floor.

4 The center medallion is made by hot-gluing flowers and greenery to the center of the garland in a radiating, dome shape. Start by wrapping the green floral tape around the stems of the material already attached to the center of the spine. In this same location, hot-glue six juniper sprigs and six eucalyptus stems. Hot-glue 12 bundles of sweet Annie, and three bundles of larkspur in place to create a very full dome. To finish, hot-glue three peonies, six large roses, and four small roses to the medallion.

5 Fill in the garland by hot-gluing the rest of the juniper, eucalyptus, larkspur, and lavender stems along the entire length of the base. Break the five hydrangea heads into 15 pieces and hot-glue two or three pieces near the three hanging points, add a few pieces to the bottom of the garland, and cluster two or three in the medallion. Olive branches hang beautifully, so hot-glue most of them on the bottom of the garland and in the medallion with only a few of them on the sides. Then hot-glue the rest of the roses and peonies to the garland with the most generous clusters at the three hanging points. Use the small roses in clusters of twos or threes; use the larger roses singly or in twos. Vary their direction—some facing down, some to the left, and so on. Fill in any remaining gaps by hot-gluing pieces of sweet Annie to the base.

6 Ask a friend to hold the garland for you or suspend it from the ceiling and cover the back of it by hot-gluing Spanish moss to the taped spine.

7 Fold the cording in half. Measure 6 inches from each end of the cording and mark. Using the medium-gauge floral wire, attach the cording at each mark to the spine underneath the medallion. You will now have a U of cording with two tails. Stretch the sides of the U out to the ends of the garland. Wrap each length of cording loosely around the garland, back to front, and attach the cording to the chenille hangers with pieces of floral wire. Hot-glue the tassels to the cording tails that are hanging underneath the medallion.

GOURDS

Lightweight and waterproof when cured, gourds have been hollowed out, left unadorned or embellished in remarkable ways, and then used as containers, bowls, fishing floats, musical instruments, cradles, and much more. Long before our ancestors used baskets or pottery, they used and decorated gourds for both the ordinary and the ceremonial aspects of life. Some cultures even took gourds with them to the "next world," as seen by the remnants of bottle gourds that have been found in ancient Egyptian tombs.

There are more than 1,000 species in the gourd, or *cucurbitaceae* family. Of that enormous family, two species are used most often by today's crafter; their familiar names are ornamentals and hard-shells. The ornamentals are recognized as those brightly colored and highly varnished gourds displayed in supermarkets in the fall. Colors can vary from creamy white to dark green. Their surfaces can be striped, mottled, warty, or grooved. Usually these gourds are 6 inches or less in length or diameter. For crafting purposes, don't buy varnished ornamentals; they never dry out to become the kind of cured gourds you need for craft projects.

Hard-shell gourds have a more limited color range and tend to have a smooth surface. However, they grow in an amazing variety of shapes, including baskets, bottles, dippers, and snakes.

In most parts of the country, you can find a good selection of ornamental and hard-shell gourds at farmer's markets and roadside vegetable stands. But you can grow your own gourds nearly as effortlessly as you can grow other members of the family, such as cucumbers and squash. The easiest to grow are the ornamentals, which can be grown in a container, with a trellis to support the climbing vines. All you need is fertilized soil, regular watering, and a warm, sunny location. Growing hard-shell gourds requires more of everything: more space, more growing time (at least 130 days of full sun between the last spring frost and the first fall frost), more fertilizer throughout the growing season, and more water.

Because mature gourds are 90 percent water, it takes three to six months (sometimes longer) to cure them completely. To cure gourds indoors or outside, space them about 6 inches apart on a rack or on several boards and turn them once a week. When dry, the skin hardens to a woody, waterproof shell, and the seeds rattle inside. Then you can carve, paint, dye, or wood burn them in a myriad of astonishing ways—as the projects that follow illustrate.

Gourd-Craft Safety

Clean your gourds outside for maximum ventilation. Because gourd dust is noxious, consider wearing a simple dust mask. If you have sensitive skin or are allergic to dust, you may want to wear rubber gloves when you clean gourds. Be sure your indoor work area is well ventilated. If children are helping to decorate gourds, you may want to substitute acrylic paints for leather dyes.

Preparing the Gourd

WHAT YOU NEED

Hard-shell gourd, cured
Plastic dishpan or tub
Dishwashing liquid
Water
Plastic pot scrubber
Sharp, pointed knife
Fine-toothed saw
Black marker or pencil
Steel scraping tool, like a file or rasp (optional)
Sandpaper

WHAT YOU DO

1 In the plastic dishpan or tub, soak the gourd in warm, soapy water for 20 minutes and use the pot scrubber to remove all the dirt and mold. Use the back side of the sharp knife to remove tough spots from the skin. Let the gourd dry completely.

2 Carefully use the fine-toothed saw to cut off the top of the gourd.

3 With the black marker or pencil, outline the opening you want. Cut through the gourd with the knife and remove the unwanted section.

4 Remove all the pulp and seeds from inside the gourd; a steel scraping tool can be very helpful. Use sandpaper to shape and smooth the opening and to smooth the inside of the gourd.

Painted Gourd with Beads

You can achieve many effects on gourds by using simple dyes and a few carefully chosen embellishments.

What You Need

Hard-shell gourd, cured
16 pieces of palm inflorescence (available from basket-supply outlets)
Leather dyes in oxblood and black
Paintbrushes
Acrylic varnish
Electric drill with 1/16-inch drill bit
Compass with pencil
1/2 × 6 × 6-inch piece of wood
Hammer
16 finishing nails, 3 inches long
Spool of fine-gauge floral wire
Wire cutters
Large-eyed needle
Spool of artificial leather sinew
33 red glass beads
7 horn beads

What You Do

1 Complete Steps 1 through 5 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132.

2 Dye the gourd with the black leather dye, using a paintbrush or the dauber that comes with the dye. When dry (about 24 hours), dye the gourd with the oxblood leather dye; these dyes are slightly transparent and the black will show through the red to create an attractive and unpredictable pattern. When dry (about 24 hours), apply a coat of the varnish and allow the gourd to dry overnight.

3 Drill a row of holes around the opening, approximately 5/16 inch from the edge and 1/2 inch apart.

4 Using the compass and pencil, draw a circle on the piece of wood the size of the gourd opening. Draw a second circle 3/16 inch larger in diameter. Hammer the finishing nails around the two circles. Place the

pieces of palm inflorescence between the two rows of nails. Then wrap the pieces of inflorescence together with four or five pieces of the fine-gauge floral wire. Remove the inflorescence and place it around the gourd opening. Thread the needle with the sinew, knot the end, and pull the needle through one of the holes from the inside of the gourd to the outside. Whipstitch the inflorescence to the gourd, going through all of the holes on the top of the gourd. Remove the floral wire. Knot the end of the sinew close to the inside of the gourd rim and trim.

5 To hang the beads, tie four pieces of sinew to the stitching on the rim where you want the beads to be located, leaving enough sinew for stringing the beads. String the beads onto the sinew. After the last bead, tie a knot on each sinew thread.

The careful, symmetrical carving on this gourd creates the illusion of a woven basket.

Carved Basket

WHAT YOU NEED

- Hard-shell gourd, cured
- Pencil
- Keyhole saw
- Sandpaper
- Off-white acrylic paint (optional)
- Paintbrushes
- U-shaped wood chisel
- Clean rags
- Leather dye in brown
- Brown paste-wax shoe polish

WHAT YOU DO

1 Complete Step 1 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132.

2 Use the pencil to draw lines to indicate the basket handle. With the keyhole saw, cut away large areas of the gourd to create a basket shape with a handle.

3 Remove all the pulp and seeds. Sand the cut edges and the inside of the bowl. If the inside surface is discolored, apply a light coat of the off-white paint.

4 Use the pencil to sketch the basket-weave pattern on the gourd. Carve along these lines with the chisel.

5 Using a clean rag, wipe brown leather dye over the outside of the gourd. Allow the gourd to dry (about 24 hours). Rub brown paste-wax shoe polish over the entire gourd and buff it with clean rags.

Gourd with Cut-Out Leaves

This lovely, decorative gourd brings the golden hues of autumn indoors.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Hard-shell gourd, cured
- 2 or 3 fresh leaves in different sizes
- Pencil
- Sharp knife
- Fine-toothed saw
- Sandpaper
- Black marker
- Acrylic paints in yellow, orange, and brown
- Paintbrushes
- Polyurethane

WHAT YOU DO

1 Complete Step 1 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132.

2 With the pencil, outline where you want to cut off a piece of the gourd for the lid. Use the knife to make an initial opening and then use the fine-toothed saw to cut off the lid.

3 Remove all the pulp and seeds. Sand the cut edges and the inside of the gourd until smooth. Do not sand the cut between the lid and the bottom of the gourd because there you want a close fit.

4 Put the lid back on the gourd. Using the leaves as pattern pieces, create a design on the body of the gourd and on the lid by tracing around the leaves with a pencil. All of the leaf tracings must touch or overlap each other. Make sure that the leaf patterns on the lid cross the cut line between the lid and the body of the gourd; this makes the lid fit more securely. Don't put any leaf patterns on the upper rim (right under the lid) or on the bottom of the gourd. Retrace the leaf patterns with the black marker.

5 Use the sharp knife to cut the gourd all the way through between the leaf patterns, being careful to keep the top rim and bottom edge intact.

6 Paint the leaves on the gourd and allow them to dry for 24 hours. Brush on a coat of polyurethane and allow it to dry.

Create a sensation this Christmas by decorating your tree with a dazzling array of colorful gourds.

Painted Christmas Ornaments

WHAT YOU NEED

Ornamental gourds, cured

Paintbrush

Acrylic paints in your choice of colors

Pen with gold or silver metallic ink (optional)

Clear enamel spray

Ribbon scraps (optional)

Scissors

Craft glue

Electric drill with 1/16-inch drill bit (optional)

Metal ornament hangers (optional)

Assorted small feathers

WHAT YOU DO

1 Complete Step 1 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132.

2 Paint the gourds with the acrylic paints and allow them to dry (about 24 hours). If desired, use a silver or gold metallic pen to draw designs on the dry, painted gourds. Spray the gourds with the clear enamel and let them dry overnight.

3 Attach your choice of hanger to the gourds. If desired, this can be as simple as cutting a loop of ribbon and gluing it to the top of the gourd, or as "professional" as drilling a hole in the top of the gourd and inserting a purchased ornament hanger.

4 Next, trim the feathers. Apply a small amount of the glue to the underside of each feather and press it onto the gourd. Allow the glue to dry.

Gourd Birdhouse

WHAT YOU NEED

- Hard-shell gourd, cured
- Compass with pencil
- Electric drill with 5/16-inch drill bit
- Flexible shaft grinder with a cylindrical-shape carbide burr
- 2 feet of string
- Vacuum cleaner
- Coat hanger (optional)
- Pencil
- Acrylic paints in dark forest green, medium dark green, light green, white, ivory, yellow, rose, and mauve
- 2 × 3-inch natural sponge
- #4 round paintbrush
- ¼-inch-wide paintbrush
- #00 liner paintbrush
- Polyurethane spray
- Leather thong, 2 feet long

Invite wrens, nuthatches, or chickadees to your neighborhood by fashioning this pretty gourd birdhouse.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Complete Step 1 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132.

2 Study the gourd to determine where you want to cut the bird's "front door." To make the hole, set the radius of the compass to ¾ inch and draw a circle 1½ inches in diameter. Drill a 5/16-inch hole in the center of the circle and then grind out the hole with the shaft grinder.

3 To make the holes for the leather thong hanger, drill two 5/16-inch holes about 1 inch down from the top of the gourd. (You may need someone to hold the gourd steady for you while you drill.)

4 Place the string through the two thong holes to hold the gourd temporarily. Examine the bottom of the gourd to find the lowest spot for the first of five drainage holes. Mark that spot with a pencil and then mark four more low locations in a circle around the first hole. Drill five 5/16-inch holes through the bottom of the gourd.

5 Using a vacuum cleaner and whatever tools you have on hand (a piece of coat hanger is helpful), completely clean out the seeds and the pulp through the bird's "front door."

6 Using the photograph as a guide, pencil on your floral design. Lightly sponge all three colors of green paint on the entire area where the floral design will

be painted. Don't forget to paint the back side of the gourd. Let the gourd dry between colors (about an hour).

7 Using the #4 round paintbrush, paint in the daisies and large flowers.

8 Using the ¼-inch-wide paintbrush, stipple the areas where you will be placing the small flowers. Let dry. Put a little of both mauve and white on the #4 paintbrush and paint in the small flowers on top of the stippling. Repeat with the rose and the white paints. Clean off the #4 paintbrush and use it to dot every other center with yellow.

9 Paint the leaves with the #4 paintbrush and the forest green paint. Highlight the larger leaves with light green. Add veins with the #00 liner paintbrush and the light green paint.

10 Allow the gourd to dry for 24 hours, then spray its entire surface with polyurethane and let it dry overnight. Insert the thong through the upper holes and tie it to your favorite tree.

Gourd Pig

WHAT YOU NEED

Martin gourd, cured

Sharp, pointed knife

Wood putty

Pencil

Electric drill with ½-inch and 1/16-inch drill bits

Coping saw

2 to 3 feet of ½-inch-diameter wooden dowel

Craft glue

Acrylic paints in brown (use a shade of brown that matches the outside of the gourd), black, and pink

Paintbrushes

4 × 4-inch piece of scrap leather

Scissors

Varnish

WHAT YOU DO

1 Complete Step 1 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132.

2 Cut off the stem of the gourd with the sharp knife. Fill in the hole with wood putty and flatten the end. This will be the pig's nose.

3 With the pencil, mark the four areas where you want the legs to be located on what is the bottom of the gourd. Drill four holes through the bottom, each ½ inch in diameter. Use the coping saw to cut the dowel into four equal pieces for the legs; each piece of dowel will be 6 to 8 inches long, depending on the size of the gourd. To determine the length, measure the distance from the pig's back to its stomach and add about 1 inch (that extra inch will be the legs that you will see protruding from the holes). Trim the dowels as needed. Put a dab of glue on one end of one dowel piece and insert it into one of the holes, making sure the dowel touches the other side of the gourd (see Figure 1 on the opposite page). The glue will help secure the dowel. Put a little glue around the outside of

Who wouldn't be charmed by the sight of this little porker? Simple to assemble, it makes a delightful gift. And unlike its flesh-and-blood relatives, you don't have to feed it!

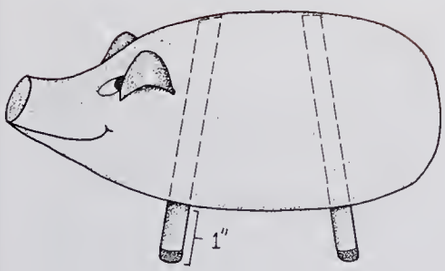


Figure 1

the hole, too. Glue the other three dowels in this manner. When the glue is dry, paint the pig's legs brown.

4 Draw the pig's eyes in pencil and then paint as desired. Paint the pig's nose pink.

5 With the sharp knife, make two slits in the pig's head for the ears. Cut two triangles from the scrap leather for the ears and glue them into the slits.

6 Drill a 1/16-inch hole through the gourd at the "rear end" for the tail. Cut a sliver of leather and twist it to make it curl. Insert it into the hole and dab a little glue around the hole to secure the tail.

7 Paint the pig with varnish and let it dry thoroughly.

Fill these pretty cut gourds with your favorite potpourri and enjoy the lingering fragrance.

Potpourri Container

WHAT YOU NEED

- Small round gourd, cured, about 8 inches in diameter
- Sharp pencil
- Wood-burning tool
- Sharp, pointed knife
- Fine-toothed saw
- Sandpaper
- Leather dyes or acrylic paints in red, green, orange, and brown
- Paintbrushes
- Varnish or polyurethane spray
- Potpourri

WHAT YOU DO

1 Complete Step 1 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132.

2 Draw a design on the gourd with the pencil. Select a design with large, repeating patterns, such as flowers or leaves, that overlap so you can cut out the spaces within the design, as shown in the photograph. Pencil in the line where you will cut to create the lid; the cut will be less visible and the lid will fit better if the line dips and curves slightly.

3 Use the wood-burning tool to engrave the design into the gourd.

4 Use the knife to make an initial opening in all of the spaces you plan to cut out in the top of the gourd. Use the knife to make a small slit along the cutting line between the lid and the bottom of the gourd. With the fine-toothed saw, cut along all of the lines outlining the spaces on the lid and along the line indicating the lid.

5 Remove all the pulp and seeds from inside the gourd. Sand the interior smooth.

6 Use the sandpaper to smooth the edges of the spaces in the lid, contouring inward. Do not sand the cut between the lid and the bottom because there you want a close fit.

7 Using the dyes or acrylic paints, color in the design. You may also want to dye or paint the interior of the gourd because it will be visible through the holes in the lid. Protect the gourd with a light coat of varnish or polyurethane spray. Let the container dry overnight and then fill it with your favorite potpourri.

Geometric patterns and luminous colors create a stunning look you can duplicate on gourd bowls, jewelry, and other decorative items.

Wood-Burned Bowls

WHAT YOU NEED

- Hard-shell gourd, cured
- Pencil
- Small ruler
- Wood-burning tool
- Soft, damp cloth
- Acrylic paints in your choice of colors
- Paintbrush
- Polyurethane spray

WHAT YOU DO

1 Complete Steps 1 through 5 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132.

2 Use the pencil and the ruler to draw your repeating design onto the gourd.

3 With the wood-burning tool, engrave the design into the gourd. Use a damp cloth to wipe off any pencil lines that are still showing.

4 Paint the gourd and allow it to dry for 24 hours. Spray the gourd with polyurethane; three coats in a period of three days will produce a hard, glossy finish.

The gourd bits and pieces that are left from other gourd projects can be made into attractive earrings, pins, and barrettes.

Gourd Jewelry

WHAT YOU NEED

- Cured, cleaned gourd scraps of various shapes and sizes
- Pencil
- Motorized cutting tool
- Sandpaper
- Backs and fittings for earrings, pins, and barrettes
- Wood-burning tool
- Wood glue
- Polyurethane spray

WHAT YOU DO

1 Pencil in the shape of your jewelry piece on the gourd scrap and cut out the pieces with the motorized cutting tool. Sand the backs of the pieces. If you are making a barrette, you will need to make a groove with the cutting tool for the metal-clip backing.

2 On the front of the piece, sketch on and engrave the design with the wood-burning tool. Turn the piece over and glue on the jewelry backs. Allow the pieces to dry for 24 hours.

3 Paint the jewelry, allow it to dry, and spray it with polyurethane.

Simple, carved motifs and subtle coloring give these gourds a distinctive and classic style.

Engraved Autumnal Gourds

WHAT YOU NEED
(for 1 gourd)

- Hard-shelled gourd, cured
- Pencil
- Latex or acrylic paints in your choice of colors
- Paintbrushes
- Other coloring agents, such as water colors, leather dyes, marking pens, or pastel crayons
- Motorized cutting tool with engraving burr
- Clear enamel spray

WHAT YOU DO

1 Complete Step 1 in "Preparing the Gourd" on page 132. For the open gourd, continue through Step 5.

2 With the pencil, draw the decorative shapes you want, using the photograph as a guide. Keep it simple. Painting and carving tiny areas will make this a more difficult and time-consuming project.

3 Using the paints, dyes, marking pens, or pastel crayons, color in the areas of your design. You don't need to color all the way to the edges of the penciled areas because the lines will be carved away.

4 With the motorized cutting tool, lightly engrave along the pencil lines.

5 Spray the finished gourd with several coats of clear enamel, letting each coat dry completely before applying the next one. This is especially important if you have used nonpermanent coloring agents, like water colors or markers.

GRAINS & GRASSES

You don't have to live near fields shimmering with golden wheat to enjoy working with grains and grasses. A few handfuls of fescue from your own backyard and a few more grasses collected from any roadside will provide wonderful materials for your nature crafts—materials rich in texture and available in a surprising range of colors.

Our ancestors certainly knew a good nature-craft material when they saw one. Before the invention of the threshing machine, farmers throughout Europe used stems of wheat and other grains to weave a variety of harvest-related figures and decorative items.

Grain & Grass Arrangement

WHAT YOU NEED

3 dried teasel pods, with stems 10 to 16 inches long

Several handfuls of Spanish moss

30 stalks of dried oats, 7 to 12 inches long

80 wheat straws, 7 to 12 inches long

70 stalks of dried rye, 7 to 12 inches long

24 stems of dried Johnson grass, 10 to 18 inches long

24 stems of dried fescue grass, 10 to 18 inches long

12 stems of dried cloud grass, 10 to 18 inches long

12 stems of dried penstemon with seed heads, 10 to 18 inches long

60 stems of dried foxtail grass, 10 to 18 inches long

24 stems of assorted dried roadside weeds, 10 to 18 inches long

30 dried iris pods, with stems 10 to 17 inches long

7 dried columbine pods, with stems 10 to 16 inches long

4 to 8 Japanese black-pine cones

7 stems of dried bunny-tail grass, 10 to 15 inches long

Liquid household bleach

Serrated knife

1 block of dry floral foam

Mushroom container, 6 × 15 inches

Floral pins

Spool of medium-gauge floral wire

Wire cutters

Green floral tape

Electric drill with 1/16-inch drill bit

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

The lush arrangement shown here was designed to be viewed from any side. Don't worry if you're short on materials or can't find the ones listed in the project instructions. Just use a smaller container, adapt the instructions to create an arrangement that will be viewed from one side only, or substitute roadside grasses and grains.

What You Do

1 Mix a solution of one part household bleach and four parts water. Place the teasel pods and stems into the solution and allow them to soak until the teasel whitens. This may take from 30 to 60 minutes. Allow the pods and stems to dry.

2 Using the serrated knife, cut the dry floral foam to fit snugly inside the mushroom container; the foam should stand about 1½ to 2 inches above the container's rim. Cover the visible surface of the floral foam with Spanish moss, securing the moss with several floral pins.

3 If you find that any of the grass or grain stems are too fragile, strengthen them with medium-gauge floral wire and floral tape before proceeding (see "Floral Wire" on page 116). Next, sort the oats into clusters of three to five stalks each. Insert these clusters into the foam first, placing the longest ones so that they stretch from one side to the other across the middle of the container. Place the shorter clusters toward the front and back of the container. Be sure that the stalks are secure in the floral foam; each cluster should be inserted 1 to 2 inches deep.

4 Sort the wheat straws and stalks of rye into small and large clusters. Reinforce the larger clusters with medium-gauge floral wire and floral tape. Then insert the stems throughout the arrangement to create a feeling of density.

5 Set aside the bunny-tail and insert the remaining grasses and weeds throughout the arrangement. Then add the stems of iris and columbine pods; these will add a touch of brown to the otherwise light-colored arrangement.

6 Using the electric drill and 1/16-inch drill bit, bore a hole in the bottom of each Japanese black-pine cone. Cut as many 3-inch-long pieces of medium-gauge floral wire as you have cones, and then hot-glue each wire into a pinecone hole. Insert three of these wired cones toward the front, left-hand corner of the arrangement. Turn the container around 180 degrees and insert the remaining three cones in a similar position.

7 Add the three stems of teasel toward the left of the arrangement, above the cones. Then add the bunny-tail grass throughout the design.

Wheat Weaving

Before you start the three projects that follow, you'll need to take a few preparatory steps. First, take a good look at Figure 1, which illustrates the parts of a wheat straw. Reference to these parts is made in the project instructions.

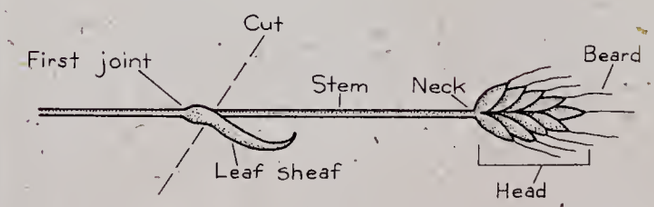


Figure 1

Second, you will need to clean and soak your wheat before you start. To do this, cut the straw above the first joint (see Figure 1) and slide the leaf sheaf away. Then soak the wheat in warm water for one-half to two hours, depending upon the wheat variety. When the stems are pliable, the wheat is ready.

Finally, you must know how to make a clove-hitch knot (see Figure 2). This knot is used to tie the straws in all three projects. Practice tying this knot a few times.

Figure 2

Hold the wheat straw horizontally in your left hand. With your left thumb hold a piece of string on top of the wheat, leaving about 4 inches of string hanging down. With your right hand, bring the upper end of the string all the way around the wheat, wrapping it to the right of the hanging end of the string. Make a second loop around the wheat, but this time, bring the string up to the left side of the hanging end, and insert the string under and through the second loop. Pull both ends of the string to tighten it and tie an overhand knot to finish off.

Carefully designed and lovingly woven, these two wheat-weaving ornaments can be displayed anywhere in your home.

Wheat-Weaving Ornaments

Heart Love Token

What You Need

4 wheat straws, with matching heads, 18 inches or longer (see "Supply Sources" on page 254)

Water

Beige carpet thread or buttonhole thread

Heavy book

3 inches of fine-gauge floral wire

8 inches of ribbon, 1 inch wide

Scissors

Ruler

Wire cutters

What You Do

1 Clean and soak the wheat according to the instructions in "Wheat Weaving" on the opposite page. With the thread, tie the four wheat stems together, just below the heads at the neck.

2 To form the heart shape, you will first need to weave a four-straw plait. Turn the palm of your left hand face up. Place the bundle of wheat with its heads hanging downward between your first and second fingers, holding it securely in place with those same fingers. With your right hand, spread the four straws out in north, south,

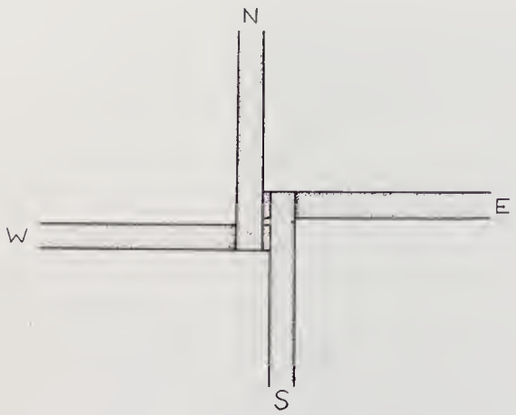


Figure 1

Figure 2

east, and west positions, making sure that the straws do not cross each other.

3 With your right hand, fold the straws from east to west; west to east; north to south; and south to north (see Figure 1 above). Each straw should be moved straight across, without crossing over the straw parallel to it.

4 Fold the straws from east to west, west to east, north to south, and south to north. Continue this folding pattern until you have woven an 8-inch-long plait. The plait should descend from between your first and second fingers. Be sure to hold the work firmly in your palm with your thumb so that the straws don't spring out of place. When you're finished, bring the four straw ends together and tie them securely with thread.

5 To locate what will be the dip at the top of the heart shape, fold the plait in half so the two ties are side by side. Then tie the plait together with thread about ¼ inch down from the fold (see Figure 2 above).

6 Align the two tied ends again, placing the end with the heads in front of the one without the heads and tie the two ends together with thread.

7 Form a heart shape with the plait and adjust the heart shape so that both sides are even and the heads of the wheat rest next to each other in a fan shape. Rest the heart on a flat surface, place a heavy book on top, and allow the heart to dry overnight.

8 When the heart is completely dry, use the ribbon to make a bow, securing its center with the 3-inch-long piece of floral wire. Then, using the same piece of wire, attach the bow to the heart just above the heads.

Harvest Doll

WHAT YOU NEED

12 wheat straws with heads removed, 15 inches long

35 wheat straws with matching heads, 5 inches long

12 inches of blue ribbon, ¼ inch wide

Miniature bouquet of dried flowers to match the ribbon

Water

Beige carpet thread or buttonhole thread

Scissors

Ruler

Styrofoam cup

Sharp knife

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

WHAT YOU DO

1 Clean and soak the wheat according to the instructions in "Wheat Weaving" on page 146. To make the bonnet, you will use a spiral weave, as shown in Figure 1. Using the thread, tie together six headless straws at the ends closest to the missing heads.

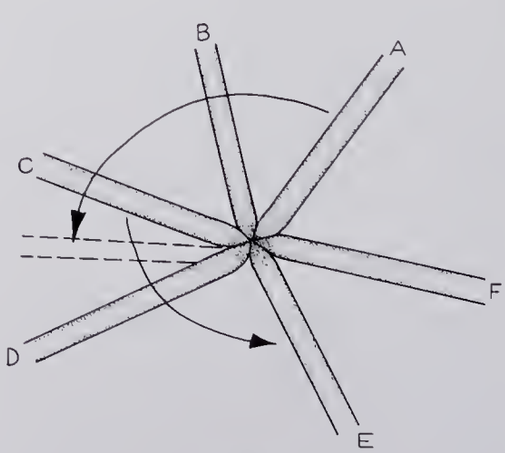


Figure 1

2 To begin, spread the long ends out in spoke fashion, with the short tied ends facing you. Move straw A up and over straws B and C, folding A to rest close to the center tie. The straw that you passed over last (straw C) will now be your working straw. Move straw C up and over the next two straws (A and D) in the same counterclockwise direction. (Turning the entire piece 90 degrees clockwise each time you move a straw may make this step and the following one easier.)

3 To form the base of the crown, you'll need to complete a total of six more folds in this manner. Do this by picking up the last straw you passed and moving it over two more straws. If you make these six folds correctly, the straws will end up in their original A through F sequence.

4 To establish the width of the crown, first study Figure 2. Move straw A clockwise under straw F and then counterclockwise over straw F, so that straw A rests alongside straw B. Straw B now becomes your working straw. Move straw B clockwise under and then counterclockwise over A, and position straw B alongside straw C. Straw C now becomes the working straw. Continue in this manner to create two rows (a total of ten moves.) Keep turning the entire piece clockwise as you work.

5 Now that you have established the crown size, you'll need to use a variation of the spiral weave to create four more rows (20 moves) to achieve the depth of the crown. In this variation, simply fold the working straw over and position it next to the next straw, as shown in Figure 3.

6 To create the brim of the hat, increase six rows (30 moves). Be sure to keep the straws on a flat plane so that the brim will be horizontal to the crown. Tuck the last straw under in order to lock it in place. Trim the straws at the edges of the brim and set the hat aside to dry.

7 To make the arms (a single piece), you will use a weave known as the "six straw fill-the-gap" weave, in which the working straw fills the gap left by the last straw moved. Start by tying the remaining six headless straws together at one end with thread. Fan the straws out like the spokes of a wheel, holding the tied ends firmly between the first and second fingers of your left hand and using your thumb to keep the spokes in place in your palm. Using Figure 4 as a guide, begin with straw A, folding it over the center of the wheel to cross both C and B. Then fold straw D over E and F. Continue folding counterclockwise in this manner, picking up the straw to the immediate left of the one you just brought down, and moving it over the next two straws until you have woven 10 inches of this pattern. Tie the end securely with thread.

8 To make the body of the doll, tie the 35 straws with matching heads together with thread, about 2 inches from their necks. This tie will form the waist. Then separate the straws in half just above the tie and insert the arm piece horizontally. To create the neck, tie the body straws ¾ inch up from the waist, just above the arm piece. Tie the body straws once again, ½ inch up from the neck. Trim the straws ¼ inch from this last tie to create the top of the doll's head. Also trim the beards at the bottom of the doll's skirt so that the completed doll will stand. Tie the arms together, as shown in the photograph on page 147.

9 To keep the wheat heads in the doll's skirt uniform while they are drying, cut the bottom from a Styrofoam cup with the knife and slip the cup down over the skirt while the doll dries. The drying process will take one or two days, depending on the weather.

10 When the doll and hat have dried, hot-glue the hat onto the doll's head. Cut a blue ribbon sash to fit around the doll's waist and hot-glue it in place. With the same ribbon, make a tiny bow for her bonnet and hot-glue this in place as well. Hot-glue the bouquet of dried flowers onto the doll's arms.

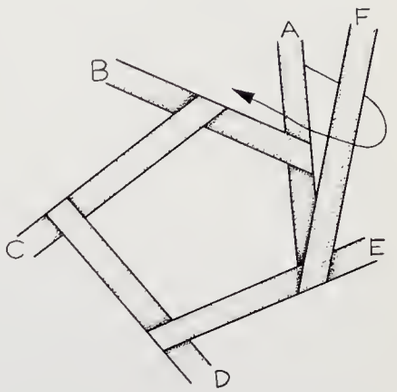


Figure 2

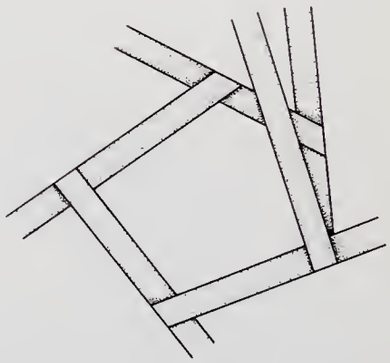


Figure 3

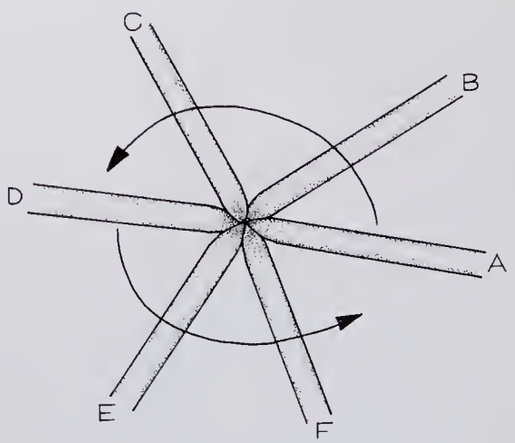
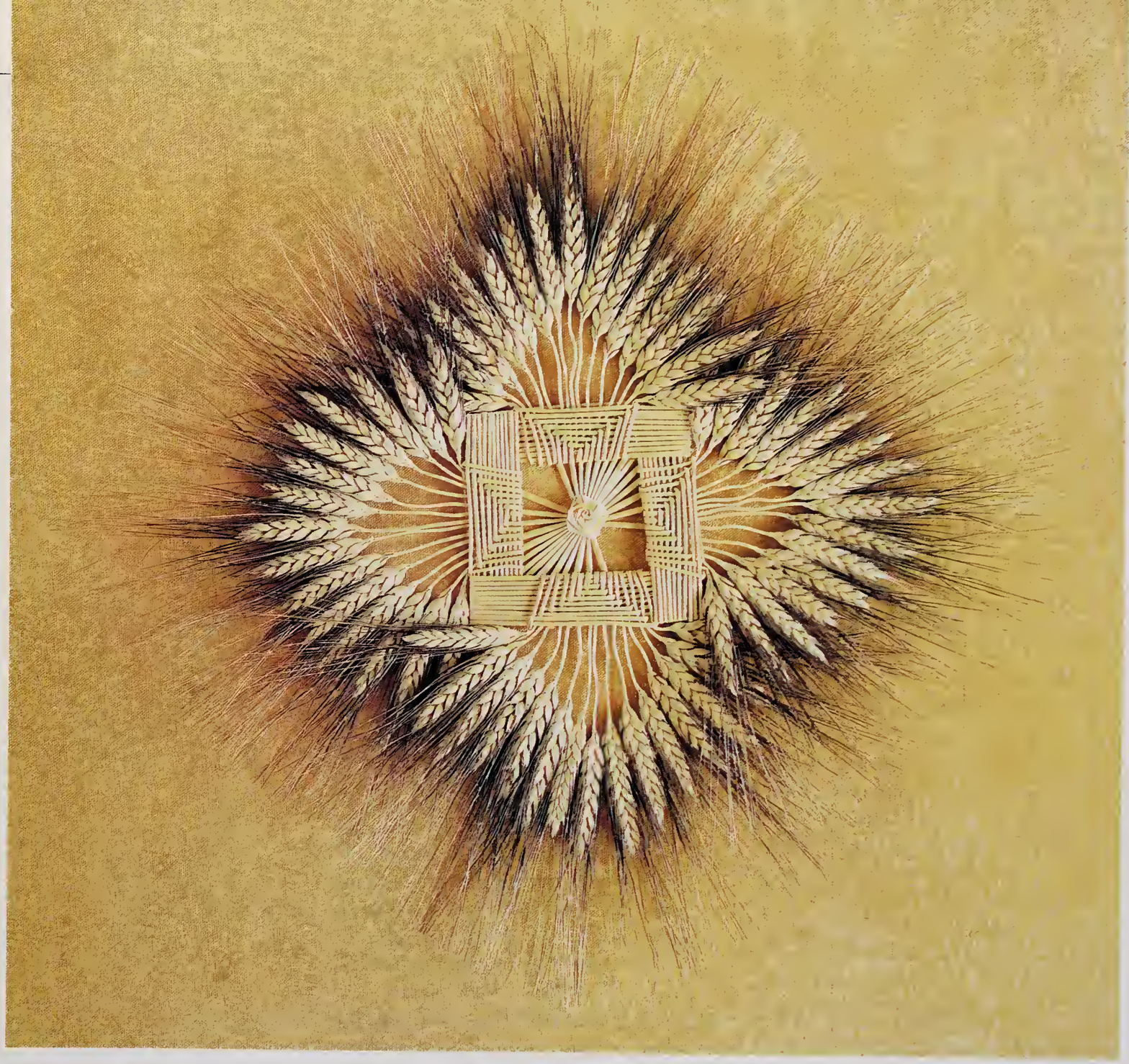


Figure 4



This ornate wheat-woven decoration is actually made in several sections which are then hot-glued together to form the complete design.

Prairie Flower

What You Need

1 wheat straw with head removed, 15 inches long

15 wheat straws with heads removed, at least 7 inches long

8 firm wheat straws with heads removed, 9 inches long*

60 wheat straws with matching heads, at least 12 inches long

Water

Sharp-pointed scissors

Beige carpet thread or buttonhole thread

Ruler

Heavy book

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

*Select eight of the firmest straws to use as base straws for the Prairie Flower sections (see Step 4). These base straws must be especially strong in order not to bend when other straws are woven through them.

What You Do

1 Clean and soak the wheat according to the instructions in "Wheat Weaving" on page 146. To make the rose that rests in the center of this project, first take the 15-inch-long headless straw, and with the point of a scissors blade, split the straw along its length without breaking it into two pieces. To flatten the split straw, run your fingernail down along the inner surfaces several times.

2 Fold the straw at a right angle 2 inches from its wide end, as shown in Figure 1. Fold the straw again, as shown in Figure 2, leaving a gap between the two vertical portions of the straw. Then fold the straw again, as shown in Figure 3. As you make these and subsequent folds, turn the piece counterclockwise so that each fold you make brings the straw downward. Continue folding in this manner to make 16 folds in all. Then tuck the straw end that you've been folding into the hole in the center of the piece. Pull down tightly on the tucked straw and, while holding the straw ends under the rose in your left hand, use your right hand to turn the petals clockwise. This will cause the petals to form a spiral. Tie the ends with thread closely under the rose and trim the ends close to the tie. Set aside to dry.

3 To make the center circle, which will rest behind the rose, tie the 15 headless straws together in their center. Hold the tied straws between your thumb and index finger in order to keep them flat and fan the straws out to form two semicircles. Trim the completed piece to a size that will cover the center area of the finished project. Set aside to dry.

4 The square of bearded straws is made in four sections; two firm straws without heads and 15 straws with matching heads are used to weave each section. Start by holding two firm straws horizontally. Center a straw with a head in front of the base straws, allowing the straw to hang downward so that the distance between its neck and the top of the base straws is 3 inches. Fold the hanging straw back and around the base straws, bringing it parallel to the base straws at their left, as shown in Figure 4.

5 Turn the piece over and position another straw with a head to the right of the first straw, allowing this straw to hang down a little less than 3 inches. Fold it over the base straws and bring its end over both itself and the first hanging straw, as shown in Figure 5.

6 Turn the piece over again. Add the third hanging straw to the right of the first straw. Note that every hanging straw should hang down a little less than the last straw added. Fold the third straw as shown in Figure 6.

7 Continue adding straws in this fashion, turning the piece over each time a new one is added, until you have added a total of 15 straws. Tuck in the ends of the last two straws. One section of your Prairie Flower is now complete.

8 Repeat Steps 4 through 7 to make three more sections; keep your work tight, leaving no spaces between the woven straws. When the four sections are completed, lay them on a flat surface. Arrange the heads so that they rest evenly next to each other, and place a heavy book on top of the sections until they dry.

9 After all the parts have dried, assemble the square of bearded straws by overlapping the ends and hot-gluing them together, as shown in the photograph on the opposite page. Trim the ends evenly. Then center and hot-glue the center circle to the back of the bearded square and hot-glue the rose to the front of the center circle.

Figure 1

Figure 2

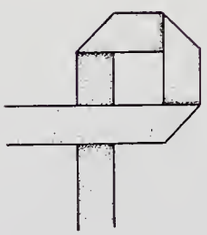


Figure 3

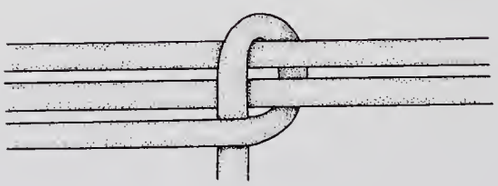


Figure 4

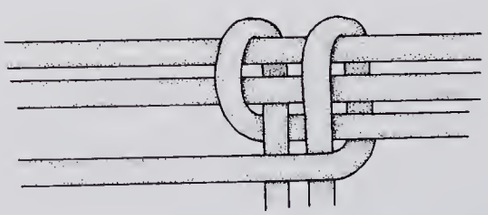


Figure 5

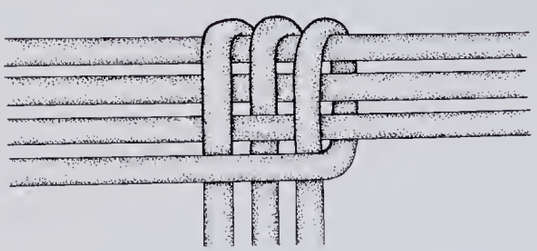


Figure 6

H HERBS

The only difficult aspect of working with herbs is coming up with a common definition for them! We've escaped this dilemma by borrowing this one: Herbs are plants that have been used historically for medicinal or culinary purposes or for their fragrance.

In recent years herbs have jumped from the salad bowl straight into the world of nature crafts. Designers throughout the country have found that these humble plants, which used to be thought of as spindly, small-bloomed, roadside weeds, are not only easy to grow, but are also perfect for making a wide range of projects—from fragrant kitchen projects, like aromatic hot pads, to decorative arrangements and wreaths. The range of colors and textures that they offer is quite astounding, as you'll see when you begin the projects in this section. In addition, many herbs are remarkably aromatic, even after they've been dried; the essential oils in their foliage contribute wonderful fragrances to decorative herbal wreaths and arrangements. Instructions for drying your own herbs are included in "Drying" on page 72.

Most herb plants will thrive even if your approach to gardening is one of benign neglect! All you'll need to grow your own are plenty of sunlight and a patch of garden soil. Herbs even do well in containers, so don't think that if you live in a city, you can't grow them. You'll also find that some herbs, such as goldenrod, grow plentifully in the wild and can be gathered freely. If you're not a gardener or gatherer, dried herbs are available from mail-order suppliers. Don't forget to check your Yellow Pages for local herb farms, too, because these are likely to offer both fresh and dried herbs as well as herb plants for the garden.

In the chart that follows, you'll find descriptions of herbs commonly used in craft projects.

Herbs for Crafting

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	GROWTH HABITS	PARTS USED
Anise hyssop	*Agastache Foeniculum*	Tender perennial; 2 to 4 feet in height; prefers partial sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Lavender flower spikes; seed heads (Culinary) Blooms
Artemisia, 'Silver King'	*Artemisia ludoviciana* var. *albula*	Perennial; averages 3 feet in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Leaves
Bay, sweet	*Laurus nobilis*	Tender perennial; up to 12 feet in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Blooms and leaves (Culinary) Leaves
Bee balm	*Monarda didyma*	Perennial; 2 to 3 feet in height; prefers full sun to partial shade and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Blooms; leaves; seed heads (Culinary) Blooms
Feverfew	*Chrysanthemum parthenium*	Self-sowing biennial; 1 to 2 feet in height; prefers full to partial sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Fragrant white flowers with yellow centers
Globe thistle	*Echinops* spp.	Perennial; 5 to 7 feet in height; grows under almost any conditions	(Decorative) Round, spiky, azure-colored blooms; leaves
Goldenrod	*Solidago* spp.	Perennial; varies widely in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Blooms and leaves
Lavender	*Lavandula* spp.	Shrubby perennial; varies in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Blooms and leaves (Culinary) Blooms
Lavender Cotton	*Santolina Chamaecyparissus*	Perennial; up to 2 feet in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Blooms
Lemon balm	*Melissa officinalis*	Hardy perennial; 1 to 3 feet in height; prefers full sun to partial shade and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Blooms and fragrant leaves (Culinary) Leaves

(continued on next page)

Herbs for Crafting—Continued

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	GROWTH HABITS	PARTS USED
Mints	*Mentha* spp.	Perennial; vary in height; prefer full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Fragrant leaves and blooms (Culinary) Fragrant leaves and blooms
Oregano	*Origanum vulgare*	Perennial; 2 feet in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Blooms and leaves (Culinary) Leaves
Purple coneflower	*Echinacea* spp.	Perennial; varies in height; prefers full sun to partial shade and will grow in almost any soil	(Decorative) Blooms
Rosemary	*Rosmarinus officinalis*	Tender perennial; up to 5 feet in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Fragrant leaves (Culinary) Fragrant leaves
Sage	*Salvia* spp.	Several hundred varieties, including perennials and annuals; averages 3 feet in height; prefers full sun to partial shade and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Leaves and blooms (Culinary) Leaves
Sweet Annie	*Artemisia annua*	Perennial; up to 6 feet in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Blooms, leaves; sprigs
Tansy	*Tanacetum vulgare*	Perennial; 3 feet in height; prefers full sun to partial shade and will grow in almost any soil	(Decorative) Blooms
Thyme	*Thymus vulgaris*	Perennial; varies in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Leaves and blooms (Culinary) Leaves
Yarrow	*Achillea millefolium*	Perennial; varies in height; prefers full sun and well-drained soil	(Decorative) Flower heads

Herbal Wreath

When your garden is overrun with herbs, gather them up and create a fragrant and attractive wreath.

What You Need

10-inch-diameter straw wreath base

100 stems of dried 'Silver King' artemisia, 6 to 8 inches long

80 stems of dried sweet Annie, 6 to 8 inches long

200 stems of dried globe amaranth, 4 to 5 inches long

40 stems of dried German statice, 6 to 8 inches long

25 stems of dried cockscomb, 4 to 6 inches long

10 dried hydrangea flower heads

Floral pins

1 roll of nylon tulle, 6 inches wide

Scissors

1 chenille stem, 12 inches long, or 1 length of medium-gauge floral wire, 10 inches long

Spray bottle filled with water

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Floral fixative spray

What You Do

1 Using a floral pin, attach one end of the tulle to the back of the wreath base. Then wrap the whole base in tulle by bringing the roll around and around it, overlapping the tulle as you do. When the base is completely covered, cut the tulle from the roll and securely fasten the cut end with another floral pin.

2 Using the chenille stem or the floral wire, fashion a hanger for the wreath (see "Hangers" on page 118). Mist your dried materials lightly with water before working with them.

3 Sort the stems of artemisia into 17 clusters, placing four to seven sprigs in each cluster. Then use floral pins to attach the clusters around the outer rim of the wreath base.

4 Group the stems of sweet Annie into 15 bunches, each containing four to seven sprigs. Using floral pins again, attach these clusters to the wreath base, placing them over the artemisia to cover the front surface of the wreath.

5 Make 18 clusters of globe amaranth stems, each containing 10 to 12 stems. Attach a floral pick to each cluster. Working toward the inner rim of the wreath base, insert these clusters on top of the circle of sweet-Annie clusters.

6 Group the German statice into clusters of five stems each. Then use floral pins to attach the clusters, placing them between the globe amaranth clusters.

7 Sort the cockscomb into clusters of five stems each. Attach a floral pick to each cluster and insert the picked clusters to fill in the remaining spaces.

8 Hot-glue the hydrangea flower heads onto the design, filling in any holes and covering any visible stems.

9 Spray the completed wreath with a floral fixative.

On a cold winter day, nothing warms the body or spirit quite as well as a steaming cup of tasty, fragrant herbal tea.

Winter Warming Tea Blend

WHAT YOU NEED

- 1 cup of dried spearmint leaves, crumbled
- 1 cup of dried peppermint leaves, crumbled
- ½ cup of dried orange peel, cut into pieces
- 1 cup of dried rose hips
- 2 tablespoons of candied ginger, diced
- ½ cup of cinnamon-stick pieces
- 1 tablespoon of whole anise seeds
- 2 tablespoons of whole cloves
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Measuring cup
- Storage tin with a lid
- Cinnamon sticks for stirring (optional)

WHAT YOU DO

1 Place the tea ingredients in a large bowl and mix them together thoroughly. That was easy, wasn't it? Because sunlight will cause both the colors and fragrance of this tea to fade, store the tea in a tin with a tight lid.

2 To make the tea, first preheat your teapot by rinsing it out with boiling water. Immediately measure in one heaping teaspoon of tea per person, as well as one additional teaspoon "for the pot." Pour boiling water into the teapot (one cup per person) and let the tea steep for at least five minutes. Strain the tea into cups. As a special touch, place a cinnamon stick on each saucer and encourage your guests to use it for stirring their tea!

The most unlikely items can be transformed into stunning bases for herbal arrangements.

Decorative Graters

Antique Grater

WHAT YOU NEED

- 6 stems of dried 'Silver King' artemisia, 6 inches long
- 10 stems of dried lavender cotton, 5 inches long
- 2 stems of dried sage, 5 inches long
- 6 stems of dried blue salvia, 5 inches long
- 2 stems of dried sweet basil, 4 inches long
- 2 stems of dried oregano, 5 inches long
- 10 stems of dried pink globe amaranth, 4 inches long
- 1 garlic bulb
- Antique grater, about 4 × 9 inches
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks
- 6 strands of raffia, 1 yard long
- 1 strand of raffia, ½ yard long

WHAT YOU DO

1 Place the grater on a flat work surface. Divide the stems of 'Silver King' artemisia into two clusters. Hot-glue one cluster to the center of the grater, with the blooms extending toward one corner of the grater. Hot-glue the second cluster on top of the first, with the blooms extending to the opposite corner.

2 Divide the stems of lavender cotton, sage, blue salvia, sweet basil, oregano, and globe amaranth into two clusters for each herb. Repeat Step 1 to attach the clusters to the grater.

3 Place the yard-long pieces of raffia together and tie them into a simple bow. Secure the bow by tying the ½-yard-long piece of raffia around it.

4 Hot-glue the bow to the center of the arrangement and hot-glue the garlic bulb on top of the bow.

Nutmeg Grater

WHAT YOU NEED

- 3 dried bay leaves
- 3 dried sage leaves
- 6 stems of dried lavender cotton, 2 inches long
- 4 dried chili peppers
- 2 sprigs of miniature baby's-breath, 2 inches long
- 2 stems of dried apricot globe amaranth, 1½ inches long
- 3 whole nutmegs
- 3 dried feverfew blooms
- Nutmeg grater
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks
- 23 inches of jute cord
- 4 inches of jute cord

WHAT YOU DO

1 Using the photograph on page 157 as a guide, hot-glue the bay leaves to the upper, inside back of the grater. Then hot-glue one sage leaf onto each bay leaf.

2 Hot-glue three stems of lavender cotton to each side of the inside back of the grater. Then hot-glue two chili peppers at each side.

3 Hot-glue one sprig of miniature baby's-breath, one stem of apricot globe amaranth, and one whole nutmeg at each side. Hot-glue the remaining nutmeg in the middle of the arrangement.

4 Make a simple bow with the 23-inch length of jute cord, tying it together in its center with the shorter piece of cord. Hot-glue the bow to the top of the grater, behind the nutmegs.

5 Hot-glue the three feverfew blooms to the center of the bow.

Artemisia Tree

WHAT YOU NEED

- 120 stems of dried baby's-breath, 18 inches long
- 150 stems of dried 'Silver King' artemisia, at least 12 inches long
- 35 dried burgundy or deep pink strawflowers
- 25 dried love-in-a-mist seedpods
- Acrylic spray paint in burgundy
- Dry floral foam, 3 × 4 × 12 inches

Here's one Christmas arrangement that you won't have to dismantle after the holidays! Its beautiful design is perfectly suited for year-round display.

Cool-melt glue gun and glue sticks

Green wet/dry floral tape

6-inch-diameter shallow bowl

Pruning shears

60 yards of burgundy satin ribbon, ¼ inch wide

Scissors

10 to 12 gray chenille stems, 12 inches long

Wire cutters

Stapler

Floral fixative spray

WHAT YOU DO

1 Spray the stems of baby's-breath with burgundy paint and set them aside to dry.

2 Using the cool-melt glue gun, glue one short end of the foam into the bowl. To further secure it, wrap two to four pieces of wet/dry floral tape from the outer surface of the bowl, up and over the block of foam, and down to the other side of the bowl's outer surface (see Figure 1). Then secure the ends of the tape by wrapping a piece of floral tape around the outer circumference of the bowl.

3 Choose one flat side of the foam to be the front of your arrangement. To form the basic tree shape, insert some of the artemisia stems with the largest flower heads into the sides and upper surface of the foam, placing them about ½ inch deep and cutting each stem to length as necessary. To establish the peak of the tree, insert one 7-inch-long stem with a very full flower head into the top center of the foam block. The stems at the very bottom of the tree should just touch the worktable surface, thereby ensuring that the bowl will be hidden (see Figure 2).

4 Once you've established the basic tree shape, use the remaining artemisia stems to fill in the rest of the tree, taking care to make sure that the arrangement is narrower at the top. Vary the angles at which you insert the stems in order to create a natural look. Cut each stem to length as you work. Take your time filling in all the blank spaces and occasionally step back to make sure that the arrangement is taking on the correct shape. Make sure that no foam is visible when you are finished.

5 The artemisia tree shown in the photograph on the opposite page boasts 24 ten-loop bows. (See "Bows" on page 46 for instructions on making these.) Make the loops about 2½ inches long. To secure each bow, cut a short length of chenille stem and twist it tightly around the bow's center loop; use the wire cutters to trim the wire ends. Cut a piece of ribbon just long enough to wrap around the twisted chenille stem and tie it at the back of the bow. To make tails for each bow, staple together four 5-inch-long pieces of ribbon in a stack. Cool-glue the tails onto the tree first, staggering them so they don't overlap each other. Then cool-glue the bows over the visible staples in the tails.

6 Cut the spray-painted baby's-breath into springs, and sort them into several small clusters, each about 2 inches wide. Cool-glue the stems of each cluster together. Then cool-glue the clusters into the tree by lifting up the artemisia, inserting each cluster, and holding it in place until the glue sets. Avoid the temptation to add too many of these small clusters; your completed tree will look better if the color contrast between the artemisia and baby's-breath is pronounced.

7 Cool-glue the strawflowers into the tree, placing them randomly throughout the design. Then cool-glue the love-in-a-mist seedpods in place.

8 Spray the completed arrangement with the floral fixative. The tree will last for several seasons. To store it, place it in a large paper bag and cover that bag with another paper bag. Store the tree in a dry, dark environment at all times.

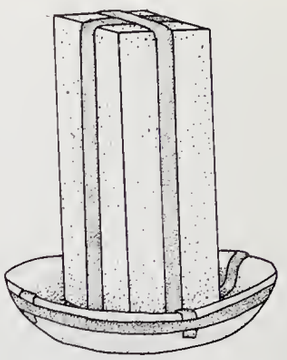


Figure 1

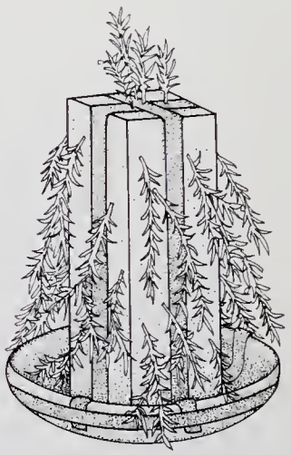


Figure 2

Clay pots—inexpensive and widely available—serve as attractive bases for these small herbal arrangements.

Upsy Daisy

WHAT YOU NEED

1 piece of sheet moss, 4 inches square

2 wheat straws, 7 to 8 inches long

3 stems of dried anise hyssop, 5 to 6 inches long

1 stem of dried mountain mint, 6 inches long

2 sprigs of miniature baby's-breath, 6 inches long

1 dried pink tea rose on a 4-inch stem

1 dried pink tea rose on a 2½-inch stem

1 stem of dried feverfew, 3 inches long

1 dried yellow yarrow flower head

1 sprig of dried pink pepperberries, 2½ inches long

4 hemlock cones, ¾ inch long

3-inch-diameter clay pot

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Dry floral foam, 1 × 1 × 1 inch

WHAT YOU DO

1 Turn the clay pot upside down, as shown at left in the photograph, and hot-glue the cube of foam to its bottom. Hot-glue the sheet moss over the foam, allowing it to extend down the sides of the clay pot.

2 Starting at the back of the arrangement, insert the two wheat straws into the foam. Toward the left of the wheat and just in front of it, insert the stems of anise hyssop, placing the tallest stem in the center. Insert the stems of mountain mint next, in front of the anise hyssop.

3 Insert the sprigs of miniature baby's-breath on either side of the mint and insert the 4-inch-long rose stem toward the left. Hot-glue the yarrow flower head beside this rose and insert the stem of feverfew in front of the rose.

4 Place the other rose stem below and to the right side of the yarrow. Hot-glue the pepperberries in the front and center of the arrangement, draping them down over the moss.

5 Hot-glue two hemlock cones to the left and above the pepperberries. Then hot-glue one remaining cone next to the shorter rose stem and the last cone toward the bottom of the pepperberries.

Small Garden Spot

What You Need

1 piece of sheet moss, 2 × 6 inches

2 pieces of dried lichen, 1 × 2 inches

4 stems of dried 'Silver King' artemisia, 8 inches long

4 stems of dried blue salvia, 6 inches long

20 stems of dried lavender cotton, 6 inches long

1 stem of dried pink larkspur, 8 inches long

3 stems of dried anise hyssop, 3 to 5 inches long

1 stem of dried oregano, 4 inches long

1 sprig of baby's-breath, 5 inches long

3 dried love-in-a-mist seedpods, with stems 3 inches long

1 dried yellow yarrow flower head

2 sprigs of miniature baby's-breath, 3 inches long

1 dried pink tea rose on a 3-inch stem

1 sprig of dried pink pepperberries, 1½ inches long

2 hemlock cones, ¾ inch long

Serrated knife

Dry floral foam, 2 × 2½ × 6 inches

Oval clay planter, 2 × 6 inches

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

1 artificial bird, 2 inches long

What You Do

1 Using the serrated knife, cut the dry floral foam to fit snugly inside the oval clay planter. Hot-glue the sheet moss to the top of the foam, applying hot-glue only around the edges of the foam.

2 Hot-glue one piece of lichen to the sheet moss at the front of the arrangement and another piece of lichen toward its back.

3 Insert the stems of artemisia toward the back, left-hand corner, pushing them into the foam so that their heights vary. Then insert the stems of blue salvia in front of the artemisia.

4 Divide the stems of lavender cotton into two groups and insert one group on each side of the blue salvia. Place the single stem of larkspur in front of the salvia.

5 On the left side of the arrangement, insert the stems of anise hyssop, locating the tallest in the center. On the right side, insert the stems of oregano and the 5-inch-long sprig of baby's-breath. Then, in the lower left corner, insert the love-in-a-mist, positioning the seedpods to form a triangle.

6 Directly in front of the larkspur, hot-glue the yarrow flower head in place to fill the hole in the design.

7 Add one 3-inch-long sprig of miniature baby's-breath to the left of the seedpods and the other to the right side. Then insert the pink tea rose to the right of the yarrow. Hot-glue the pepperberries below the yarrow and the hemlock cones beside the lichen at the front of the arrangement.

8 Hot-glue the bird to the right of the lichen, as shown at right in the photograph on the opposite page.

Feel free to substitute any dried herbs for those shown in this arrangement; its structure, textures, and colors are more important than the individual materials used to create the tiered design.

Cottage Herb Garden

What You Need

1 piece of sheet moss, 10 × 24 inches

4 stems of dried 'Silver King' artemisia, 17 inches long

16 stems of dried sweet Annie, 15 inches long

5 stems of dried blue larkspur, 16 inches long

14 stems of dried goldenrod, 15 inches long

4 stems of dried rat-tail statice, 17 inches long

5 stems of dried lemon mint, 14 inches long

10 stems of dried pearly everlasting, 16 inches long

11 stems of dried mountain mint, 12 inches long

8 stems of dried wild oregano or mint, 14 inches long

12 wheat straws, 15 inches long

3 stems of dried sarracenia,* 10 to 15 inches long

6 stems of dried oregano, 6 to 12 inches long

6 stems of dried pink rosebuds on 12-inch stems

10 stems of dried split-leaf mountain mint, 9 inches long

10 stems of dried anise hyssop, 6 to 10 inches long

12 dried love-in-a-mist seedpods, with stems 5 to 10 inches long

8 stems of dried apple mint, 10 inches long

5 stems of dried plumed celosia, 7 to 12 inches long

6 stems of dried cinnamon basil, 10 inches long

3 stems of dried pink larkspur, 11 inches long

8 stems of dried split-leaf mountain mint, 7 inches long

1 dried yellow yarrow flower head

3 stems of dried tansy, 9 inches long

6 stems of dried sage, 5 inches long

4 stems of dried lavender cotton, 7 inches long

4 stems of dried pink yarrow, 5 inches long

2 dried cockscomb flower heads

1 piece of dried lichen, 1½ inches square

2 pieces of moss-covered bark, 1 × 3 inches

2 sprigs of dried pepperberries, 3 inches long

Additional sheet moss (optional)

Serrated knife

1 piece of dry floral foam, 4 × 6 × 17 inches

Wooden crate, 4 × 6 × 17 inches

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

* ***Note:*** Sarracenia is endangered and should not be collected from the wild. If you don't grow your own, make sure that your floral supplier is selling you propagated, not wild-collected, plants.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Using the serrated knife, cut the floral foam to fit snugly into the crate. Hot-glue the 10 × 24-inch piece of sheet moss over the foam to cover it, applying the glue only at the edges of the foam.

2 Study Figure 1 closely. As you can see, this arrangement is constructed in rows. Starting at the back left-hand corner of the crate, insert four stems of 'Silver King' artemisia into the foam, followed by eight stems of sweet Annie, all of the larkspur, eight stems of goldenrod, all of the rat-tail statice, eight more stems of sweet Annie, and all of the lemon-mint stems. Finally, in the back right-hand corner, insert the ten stems of pearly everlasting.

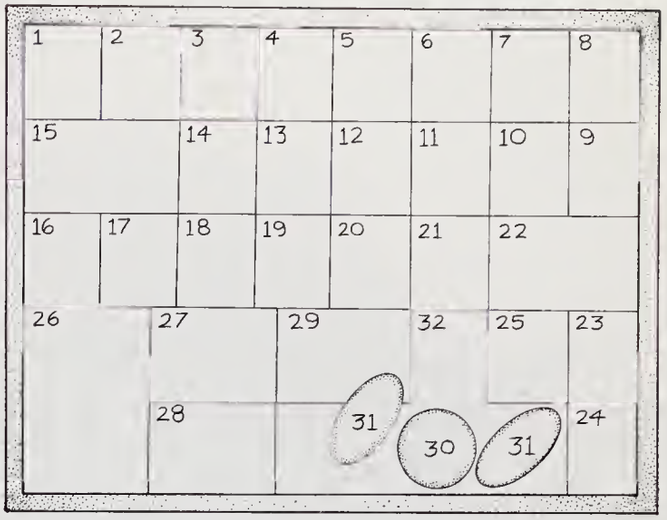


Figure 1

3 Working now from right to left, insert the specified numbers of each material in the next row, as indicated in Figure 1. Remember that the materials in this row should be placed slightly lower than those in the row behind it in order to provide a tiered effect.

4 Working from left to right this time, insert the specified numbers of each material in the third row, again inserting the materials so that they are slightly lower than those in the row behind them.

5 To complete the next two rows, first insert the split-leaf mountain mint, the yellow yarrow immediately in front of it, and the tansy next to the mint. Then insert the sage and lavender cotton in the front left-hand corner. Next, insert the pink yarrow in front of the lavender cotton and the crested cockscomb in front of the apple mint and plumed celosia. Position the lichen and the pieces of moss-covered bark toward the center front of the arrangement. Hot-glue the pink pepperberries on top of the lichen and the bark so that the berries fill in any open areas around these pieces.

6 If you wish, hot-glue additional sheet moss into any cracks in the crate.

1. 'Silver King' artemisia, 4 stems
2. Sweet Annie, 8 stems
3. Blue larkspur, 5 stems
4. Goldenrod, 8 stems
5. Rat-tail statice, 4 stems
6. Sweet Annie, 8 stems
7. Lemon mint, 5 stems
8. Pearly everlasting, 10 stems
9. Mountain mint, 11 stems
10. Wild oregano or mint, 8 stems
11. Wheat, 12 straws
12. Sarracenia, 3 stems
13. Goldenrod, 6 stems
14. Oregano, 6 stems
15. Rosebuds, 6 stems
16. Split-leaf mountain mint, 9 inches long, 10 stems
17. Anise hyssop, 10 stems
18. Love-in-a-mist seedpods, 12
19. Apple mint, 8 stems
20. Plumed celosia, 5 stems
21. Basil, 6 stems
22. Pink larkspur, 3 stems
23. Split-leaf mountain mint, 7 inches long, 8 stems
24. Yellow yarrow, 1 flower head
25. Tansy, 3 stems
26. Sage, 6 stems
27. Lavender cotton, 4 stems
28. Pink yarrow, 4 stems
29. Cockscomb, 2 flower heads
30. Lichen, 1 piece
31. Bark, 2 pieces
32. Pepperberries, 2 sprigs

This colorful and fragrant miniature wreath will act as an eye-catching adornment for your refrigerator door. Use it to hold treasured photographs in place or display it all by itself.

Refrigerator Magnet

WHAT YOU NEED

- 5-inch-diameter artificial evergreen wreath base
- 10 dried yarrow flower heads
- 15 stems of dried oregano blooms, 1 to 2 inches long
- 10 sprigs of dried 'Silver King' artemisia, 1 to 2 inches long
- 8 stems of dried anise hyssop, 2 to 2½ inches long
- 8 dried globe-amaranth flower heads
- 6 dried roses on 1½-inch stems
- 6 dried hops blooms
- Wire cutters
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks
- 3 button magnets, ¾ inch in diameter
- Floral fixative spray

WHAT YOU DO

1 If necessary, use the wire cutters to shape and trim the branches of the wreath base.

2 Using the hot-glue gun, attach the yarrow flower heads around the outer rim of the wreath base, allowing some green to show through. Then hot-glue nine stems of oregano blooms around the inner rim of the wreath base. Hot-glue the sprigs of 'Silver King' artemisia in place, locating them among the yarrow flower heads.

3 Hot-glue the stems of anise hyssop evenly around the wreath base, placing the stems above the yarrow flower heads. Then hot-glue the globe amaranth flower heads around the base, locating them adjacent to the anise hyssop.

4 Hot-glue the roses in place, spacing them evenly around the front of the wreath. Then carefully hot-glue the hops between them.

5 Hot-glue the remaining stems of oregano into any holes left in the design, but allow some of the evergreen material to peek through.

6 Turn the wreath over and hot-glue the three button magnets onto the back surface and near the inner rim of the wreath base, positioning them at the five, eight, and twelve o'clock positions.

7 Turn the wreath face up again and spray the front surface with the fixative in order to protect the dried materials from humidity.

LEAVES L

Autumn leaves, in all their brilliant colors and bold shapes, may be the most readily available and abundant nature-craft material in existence. An afternoon walk along your favorite tree-lined road or path will yield as many leaves as you can carry home. Gather them from the ground or from the lowest branches, making sure to select those that are perfectly shaped and at their peak colors. To help the leaves retain their colors, treat them with a glycerin solution before you start your project (see "Preserving Leaves" below).

For the two projects in this section, select any autumn leaves that strike your fancy; but keep in mind that some leaves will retain their colors better than others. Japanese maple leaves, for example, may retain subtle hints of color for up to two years. Be sure that each leaf you collect has a fairly long stem because they must stand upright in the glycerin solution.

Preserving Leaves

PRESERVING AUTUMN LEAVES

Make several bunches of leaves, using a loosely twisted rubber band to secure eight to ten stems in each bunch. (Be careful—bunches that are bound too tightly may mold.) With a scissors or pruning shears, cut the stem ends to equal lengths. Thoroughly mix three ounces of glycerin and one quart of water together in a large glass container. Stand each leaf bunch upright in a small glass container, with the stem ends at the bottom. Carefully add enough of the glycerin solution to cover the stems. Place the containers in a cool, dark place for about five days or until the leaves feel supple to the touch. Remove the leaves from the glycerin solution and store them in covered boxes.

PRESERVING GREEN LEAVES

Mix six ounces of glycerin and two quarts of water in a one-gallon glass container that has a wide mouth. Crush the cut end of several 20- to 24-inch-long leaf-bearing branches with a hammer. Place the branches upright in the glycerin solution. As the liquid is absorbed, add water to the jar to maintain the original liquid level. The leaves will begin to darken and become leathery. Before the color change reaches the leaf tips, remove the branches from the solution and spread them out to dry. Absorption times will range from two weeks for very thin leaves to as long as six weeks for thicker leaves. To store the preserved green leaves, hang them upside down in a dark location or place them in covered boxes.

For an unusual decorative touch at Christmas or Halloween, craft these "balls o' fire" and bring nature's brilliant colors indoors.

Autumnal Orb

What You Need (for 1 orb)

Several handfuls of glycerin-treated autumn leaves*

Scissors

Cool-melt glue gun and glue sticks

3- or 4-inch-diameter rigid polystyrene ball

Several yards of gold metallic thread

Straight pins

*You can purchase glycerin-preserved materials from craft-supply stores and mail-order suppliers, or you can preserve the materials yourself (see "Preserving with Glycerin" on page 78 and "Preserving Leaves" on page 165).

What You Do

1 Trim the stems from the preserved leaves. Then, one by one, cool-glue them onto the polystyrene ball, overlapping them as you glue. (Avoid hot-glue guns for this project because they tend to singe the leaves.) Before cool-gluing the last leaf in place, tie one end of the gold metallic thread to a straight pin and push the pin into the remaining uncovered section of the ball. Then cover the pin by cool-gluing the last leaf in place.

2 Using the photo as a guide, randomly wind the metallic thread around the ball until you achieve your desired effect.

3 Cut the thread, tie it to another straight pin, and anchor the pin to the ball by inserting it under the edge of a leaf. Then cool-glue that leaf edge down.

Gold-Leaf Topiary

WHAT YOU NEED

Several handfuls of glycerin-treated ginkgo leaves

1 shaggy-bark acorn cap

1 handful of Spanish moss

Gold acrylic spray paint

Small terra-cotta pot

1 bamboo stake or wooden dowel, ¼ inch in diameter and 9 inches long

1 block of floral foam to fit the pot

Serrated knife

Cool-melt glue gun and glue sticks

Plaster of paris

Scissors

Rigid polystyrene cone, 8 inches high

WHAT YOU DO

1 Apply a coat of gold acrylic spray paint to the terra-cotta pot, the bamboo stake, and the acorn cap. Let the paint dry thoroughly.

2 Place the floral foam inside the pot, using the serrated knife to cut it to size.

3 Insert the bamboo stake into the foam, making sure that the stake is upright. Anchor the stake with cool glue.

4 Mix the plaster of paris according to the manufacturer's directions. Then pour it into the pot to cover the foam and stabilize the bamboo. The plaster will prevent the weight of the finished topiary from tipping over the pot.

5 Trim the stems from the ginkgo leaves, and beginning at the base of the polystyrene cone, arrange and cool-glue them in place, overlapping them as you work toward the top of the cone.

6 When the cone is covered, position it over the bamboo stake and gently push it down to the desired height. Remove the cone, insert some cool glue into the cavity that you've just created, and replace the cone on the bamboo.

7 At the very top of the cone, fold over the ends of the leaves so that they lie flat; then cool-glue the acorn cap in place on top of the leaves.

8 Cover the exposed plaster of paris with the Spanish moss, cool-gluing it in place and trimming the moss as needed.

Although many nature crafts complement a rustic interior, this gold-leaf topiary is designed for the most elegant room in your house.

MOSSES, LICHENS & FUNGI

Some of the most versatile natural materials are also the most humble: The moss, lichen, and fungus that you pay little attention to when enjoying the outdoors can be used to beautiful and practical effect in a wide range of craft projects.

Of the three, moss has the greatest appeal and the most versatility. The most commonly used mosses for floral projects are Spanish, sphagnum, sheet, and mood moss. Moss is used as a wrapping for straw or foam wreath bases and as a base by itself (see "Bases" on page 15). To cover a foam or straw base with Spanish moss, simply arrange the moss around the top and sides and then secure it in place with floral pins or with loose wraps of monofilament or thin-gauge floral wire. If you're using sheet or mood moss, simply wrap it around the base and secure it with floral pins. Sheet moss is often used to cover a topiary form, and sphagnum moss is used for filling the topiary frame. You can also cover other objects: A plain wooden box can be transformed by gluing on a thin layer of sheet or mood moss and then hot-gluing dried flowers to the moss.

Moss is appreciated because it provides a good surface for hot glue to adhere to, and it is receptive to floral picks and single stems of flowers or greenery. When wet, moss retains moisture for days, making it ideal for filling live topiaries. For a natural look, moss stands up well when portions of it are left unadorned. As a decorative touch, moss can be the visual link that pulls together the whole floral design. It adds texture, enhances the natural look of a project, and is an attractive, inexpensive addition on large wreaths, reducing the overall cost of often pricey purchased materials. Spanish moss makes a terrific filler, too, hiding any gaps that remain between your materials. If the gaps are small, you can simply tuck small clumps of moss into the spaces. With large spaces, you'll need to hot-glue the moss to the base; be sure to use a pencil to press the moss into the glue so you don't burn yourself.

Harvesting Moss

Moss can be gathered at any time of the year and is usually found growing in humid, shady areas. Collect the moss while it is moist, but be careful—it easily breaks apart when wet. You may need to use a knife to sever the moss from its growth under the top layer of soil.

When you return home, clean off the dirt, sticks, and debris. Place the moss upside down on sheets of absorbent paper and let it air-dry for a week or two. You may need to change the damp paper once or twice. If you follow this process, the moss will retain most of its original color. Kept in a box away from light, the moss will last a long time. If you want the moss to be fresh again, simply wet it.

If you plan to harvest your own moss, please find out which types, if any, are endangered in your area. Even if none are, it's still good practice to take only a small amount from any one locale so that you don't harm the ecosystem. You can also purchase several varieties of moss from craft-supply stores or mail-order suppliers; mail-order companies assert that they grow their own moss and never sell any that are harvested from the wild.

Using Fungi and Lichens

Fungi and lichens work wonders when used as accents. They mix well with flowers and foliage, providing interesting texture and movement to a floral project. Some varieties look like lace; others look like fossils. When combined with mosses, they give the project a "touch me" quality and a faint, mulch-like aroma of the deep woods.

Most fungi and lichens used in craft projects are gathered from backyards or a walk in the woods; bracket fungi are particularly popular because of their range of color—from white and cream to shades of brown. If you collect your own, allow the fungi and lichens to air-dry for a week or two before using them and store them in covered boxes. Some varieties, such as the sponge mushroom, can be purchased from craft stores or mail-order suppliers. Exercise the same good judgment when collecting these materials from the wild as you do when gathering mosses.

Decorate a purchased basket or one you've made by assembling an arrangement of treasures from your own backyard.

Landscape Basket

What You Need

Kudzu or grapevine basket, 7 inches tall and 9 inches in diameter

10 to 12 small rocks

1 piece of mood moss, 12 inches square

1 piece of sheet moss, large enough to cover the basket opening

2 pieces of driftwood or 2 sticks, 3 to 5 inches long

1 stem of dried teasel, 4 inches long

1 stem of dried broomcorn, 4 inches long

5 to 6 small pieces of deerfoot moss

Assorted dried fungi and lichens

(continued on next page)

17 to 20 dried bupleurum florets (or any other small, green florets)

2 stems of dried blue larkspur, 4 inches long

7 Australian long-leaf pinecones

3 or 4 small pieces of bark

30 stems of dried tansy, 1 to 4 inches long

6 dried tansy flower heads

4 to 6 stems of dried rose hips, 2 inches long

2 stems of dried quaking grass, 3 inches long

1 small feather

2 or 3 blocks of floral foam, 4 inches square

Sharp knife

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Floral pins

WHAT YOU DO

1 Put the rocks in the basket to give it weight. Use enough foam to fill the inside of the basket. With a sharp knife, cut a piece off one block to form a small "hill" and hot-glue it off center toward the back of the basket. Cover this mound with mood moss, using floral pins to secure. Pin the sheet moss on top of the piece of foam in the basket.

2 To one side of this "hill," add the longer piece of driftwood or a stick, standing it vertically and pushing one end down through the moss into the foam. Place the second piece of wood below the hill, opposite the first piece. To emphasize the height of this hill, add the teasel stem, flanked by the broomcorn, pushing them into the moss-covered foam.

3 Break the rest of the mood moss into small pieces and wet the piece to make them pliable. Create the effect of a woodland floor by pinning the mood moss on top of the other moss and hot-gluing bits of deerfoot moss into place as accents. Hot-glue the assorted fungi and lichens to the moss-covered foam, with some draped over the edge of the basket and some on the sides. Be sure to turn the basket as you work to make sure you are fully decorating it from all vantage points.

4 Hot-glue the bupleurum florets in groupings of four to six all over the moss. Hot-glue the larkspur in place. Nestle the pinecones in and around the florets, using hot glue to secure them. Hot-glue the bark in place. Disperse the tansy all over the moss; if the stems are sturdy enough, simply push them into the moss; otherwise, hot-glue them in place. Hot-glue the tansy flower heads onto two sides of the basket. To give a sense of movement, hot-glue the rose hips, the quaking grass, and the feather in a pleasing distribution all over the moss, nestled close to other materials.

Moss Wreath with Bird

What You Need

14-inch-diameter straw wreath base

2 pounds of Spanish moss

1 piece of driftwood or a stick, at least 4 inches long

1 piece of sheet moss, 9 inches square

25 pieces of deerfoot moss

Assorted dried lichens, like old man's beard, gray-black lichen, and chartreuse lichen

Assorted dried fungi, found on decaying trees or purchased from suppliers

4 stems of dried yellow yarrow, broken in 12 to 15 pieces

1 martynia pod

2 dried galax leaves

3 dried lemon leaves

3 or 4 dried teasel pods

1 lichen-covered twig, 4 to 5 inches long

Paper from a hornet or wasp nest (optional)

4 or 5 false indigo pods or any dark pod

6 stems of dried tansy, 3 to 4 inches long

18 inches of heavy-gauge wire

Floral pins

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

1 artificial bird

Woodland materials are anything but drab when used in an artful arrangement with other natural materials.

What You Do

1 Remove the green plastic wrapper from the straw wreath base. With the heavy-gauge wire, fashion a hanger for the wreath as described in "Hangers" on page 118.

2 Completely cover the wreath base with Spanish moss, using the floral pins to secure. Make sure none of the straw shows.

3 Attach the driftwood or the stick so that it appears to hang in the center of the wreath. Each piece of wood will be different; its shape will suggest how you need to attach it. For this project, floral pins were hot-glued to the two sides of the wood and then the piece was wedged into the base.

4 Wrap the top third of the wreath base with sheet moss, attached with hot glue and floral pins. Cover the bottom two-thirds with a combination of deerfoot moss and lichens, using hot glue and floral pins. The shell-like lichen on the lower right, as shown in the photograph on page 171, is used to draw your eye away from the bird and back around the wreath. Hot-glue a few bunches of fungi to the base.

5 Hot-glue the pieces of yarrow to the outer and inner rims and to the top of the wreath. Slip the martynia pod behind some of the moss at the three o'clock position, using a floral pin to hold it to the wreath base. Hot-glue some of the galax and lemon leaves to the base at four o'clock and the rest of the leaves at eleven o'clock.

6 To vary the height and texture of the wreath, hot-glue the teasel pods near both groups of leaves and the lichen-covered twig at the eleven o'clock position. If desired, hot-glue bits of hornet or wasp-nest paper wherever you notice gaps. To add contrast, hot-glue the false indigo pods to the base at two, four, and ten o'clock. To brighten the wreath, hot-glue the tansy on the lower half of the wreath. To provide a clear focal point, hot-glue the bird to the driftwood.

Even the most humble materials can work together to achieve an elegant effect.

Forest Wreath

WHAT YOU NEED

12-inch-diameter straw wreath base wrapped in birch bark*

2 dried sponge mushrooms

1 small bunch of lace moss

1 large handful of dried black lichen

6 small pieces of moss

8 wild onion bulbs

1 dried globe thistle

3 stems of dried Australian daisy, 1 inch long

24 dried pink globe amaranths

12 dried pink strawflowers

6 stems of dried ornamental grass, 6 inches long

Scissors

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

*Available at craft-supply stores, or you can make your own by wrapping bark around a straw wreath base and securing it with dabs of hot glue (see "Bark" on page 10).

What You Do

1 Hot-glue the sponge mushrooms onto the bottom center of the wreath base, with one in front of the other. You may have to trim the mushrooms with scissors so they will fit the curve of the wreath base.

2 Hot-glue the lace moss onto the lower half of the wreath base, making sure to cover the inner and outer rims and the front. Hot-glue half of the black lichen onto the lower portion of the wreath base and half between the spaces in the birch bark on the top portion of the wreath base. Hot-glue the small pieces of moss to the bottom half of the wreath base and save one or two pieces to hot-glue to the spaces between the bark, as shown in the photograph on the opposite page.

3 Hot-glue all the wild onion bulbs directly below the mushrooms. Hot-glue the globe thistle to the left of the front mushroom.

4 Hot-glue two stems of Australian daisy below the front mushroom and one stem to the left of the globe thistle. Hot-glue all of the globe amaranth and the strawflower heads to the wreath base, clustering most of them below and around the mushrooms to enhance the wreath's focal point. Lastly, hot-glue three stems of ornamental grass on each side of the mushrooms.

PAPER

When we think of paper, what often comes to mind is a clean, white sheet of typing or notebook paper—functional and completely without personality. But a sheet of handmade paper might as well be the thumbprint of its designer. As you'll soon discover, handmade paper can be as textured or smooth, as colorful or discreet, and as thick or as thin as you like—and no two sheets will ever look the same.

Making handmade paper requires very few materials—none of them expensive. In addition, papermaking is a craft that invites success. The instructions provided in this section will walk you through the creation of sheet after sheet of beautiful, textured paper that is perfectly suited for making cards, decorative boxes, and fanciful picture frames. Building the simple mold, as described below in "Making the Mold," takes only a few minutes, and the actual papermaking process is so easy that you may want to invite your children to join you. Unless, of course, you'd rather savor the experience alone!

Making the Mold

On a level work surface, form a rectangle with two pieces of ¾ × 1½ × 11-inch wood molding and two pieces of ¾ × 1½ × 9-inch wood molding by placing the shorter pieces against the ends of the longer ones, as shown in the figure on the right. Fasten the pieces of molding together by turning the rectangle on end and by hammering two 8d finishing nails through each short piece and into the end of each longer piece. Then use a staple gun to fasten a 9 × 11-inch piece of silk-screen mesh (available at art-supply stores) to the bottom of the wooden rectangle, placing the staples ½ inch apart. For larger molds, just use longer pieces of molding and a larger piece of mesh.

Handmade Paper with Natural Materials

What You Need (for several sheets)

- Several handfuls of dried natural materials, like small blooms, potpourri, leaves, coffee grounds, or tea leaves
- Used paper, like newsprint, magazines, or construction paper
- Plastic container or bucket
- Water
- 2 pieces of silk-screen mesh, $7\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inches
- Paper mold (see "Making the Mold" on the opposite page)
- Blender or food processor
- Large, rectangular plastic container, at least $5 \times 13 \times 15$ inches (A new cat-litter pan is ideal!)
- Fine-meshed sieve (optional)
- 1-inch-diameter wooden dowel, 6 inches long
- Several cotton towels, pieces of wool blanket, or cotton felt
- Large stone or brick with a flat surface
- Large sheet of glass or rigid thermoplastic
- Paper towels or sheets of blotting paper
- Heavy object, like a book or a brick

As autumn nears, capture your summer garden in paper by drying and including a few handfuls of your favorite summer blooms and foliage.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Assemble your materials. Remove all foreign objects from the used paper, including staples and tape. Check to see that the two pieces of silk-screen mesh fit into the mold you've made; they should fit snugly against the bottom without buckling. Set the mold aside.

2 Cut or tear the paper into small pieces and place them in the plastic container or bucket. Fill the container with water and allow the paper to soak overnight. (If the paper is nonabsorbent, use hot water and allow a few extra hours soaking time.) To make the pulp, fill the blender or food processor two-thirds full with water. Add two or three handfuls of the wet paper pieces. To make the smoothest paper possible, blend the contents until liquefied. For more heavily textured paper, blend only until the paper has been chopped into smaller pieces.

3 Fill the rectangular container about two-thirds full with a combination of blended pulp and fresh water, adding two cups of pulp to each gallon of water. To make thinner paper, increase the proportion of water; for thicker paper, increase the proportion of pulp. (If you'd prefer to store the pulp and resume work later, press the pulp dry in a fine-meshed sieve and then allow the lump of pressed pulp to air-dry for later use. Resoak the pressed pulp when you're ready to make your paper.)

4 Sprinkle a handful or two of dried natural materials over the surface of the mixture. Dried flowers and small dried leaves from your garden will add delightful flecks of color. For especially interesting textures, try delicate stalks of dried grasses, seeds, and even common roadside weeds.

5 Place one piece of the silk-screen mesh into the bottom of the mold; it should rest smoothly on top of the mesh that is stapled to the mold. Using one hand, stir the pulpy mixture so that the pulp doesn't sink to the bottom. Then hold the mold by its short ends and dip it vertically into the mixture at the far end of the container.

6 Pull the mold toward you, raising the long bottom edge up as you do; the mold should be horizontal by the time you lift it from the mixture. Papermakers call this step "drawing." Hold the mold in this position, directly over the container, until the water has drained off. The mesh should be covered with an even layer of wet paper pulp.

7 While the newly drawn paper is still in the mold, place the second piece of the silk-screen mesh on top of it.

8 To squeeze additional water from the paper, roll the wooden dowel back and forth several times over the upper sheet of mesh.

9 Place two or three layers of the cotton towels directly in front of you. Invert the mold over the towels to remove the two screens and the sheet of paper that rests between them.

10 Place another two layers of cotton towels on top of the sandwiched paper. Then press the flat stone down onto the towels to press out as much water as possible. If necessary, replace the damp towels with dry ones and press again.

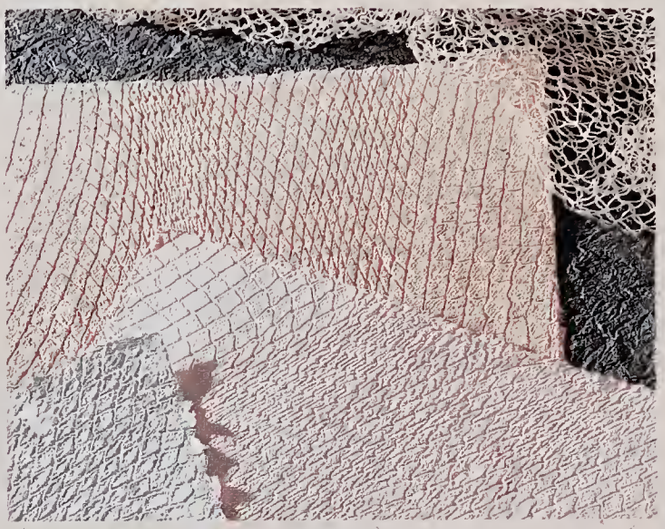
11 Remove the upper layers of cotton towels and the upper piece of screen. Lift the lower screen, with the sheet of paper on top of it, carefully turn it over, and press the paper gently against the glass or thermoplastic drying surface. Rub gently on top of the screen until the paper sticks to the glass. Carefully peel away the screen and rest the sheet of glass or plastic at an angle against a wall.

12 As the sheet of paper dries, it will pull away from the glass or plastic. As soon as it falls off, place the still-damp sheet flat on a paper towel or blotting paper. Place another paper towel over it and rest a heavy object, such as a book or brick, on top. (When making multiple sheets of paper, stack them for pressing, separating the handmade sheets by covering each one with a paper towel.) You may need to remoisten the paper slightly before pressing it; if it's too dry, it won't flatten sufficiently, even under weights.

13 Allow the handmade paper to dry for at least 24 hours. To make additional sheets using the soaked pulp, simply begin again with Step 2 on page 176.

Impressed Papers

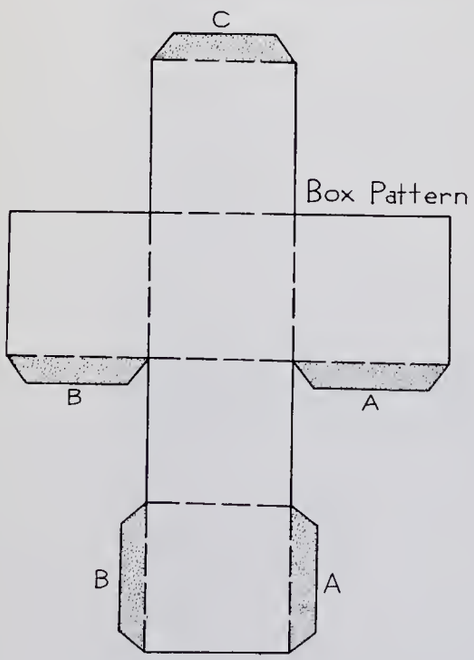
A wide variety of natural objects will leave interesting impressions in damp paper. To add impressions to handmade paper, complete Steps 1 through 8 of "Handmade Paper with Natural Materials" on page 175. Remove the upper piece of mesh, arrange your materials on top of the exposed sheet of paper, replace the mesh, and impress the image into the paper by rolling the dowel back and forth over the screen again. Proceed with the remaining steps, but take your time and carefully peel the impressed object from the paper sheet before pressing it against the sheet of glass or plastic.



If you'd like to embed a relatively flat object right into the paper and leave it there, simply insert it between the paper and the screen immediately after the water has been drained from the mold. The unrolled, damp paper will readily accept and retain flat objects, such as leaves and pressed flowers. Proceed with the remaining steps as usual, but do not remove the object from the paper before pressing it against the glass.

Transforming a sheet of gorgeous handmade paper into a distinctive gift box is a simple matter of cutting, folding, and gluing.

Handmade Paper Boxes



Box Pattern

WHAT YOU NEED

Box pattern

1 sheet of handmade paper (see "Handmade Paper with Natural Materials" on page 175)

Pencil

Sharp scissors

Ruler

½-inch-wide paintbrush

Glass of water

White craft glue

WHAT YOU DO

1 Have the Box Pattern enlarged at a copy shop until each of the six squares in it is 2¾ inches square. For a larger square box, simply enlarge the pattern as much as you'd like. To make rectangular boxes, draw your own pattern, using the Box Pattern as a guide. Place the enlarged Box Pattern on top of the handmade paper on the surface that will be the interior of the completed box. Use the pencil to trace the pattern's shape onto the paper. Then use the sharp scissors to cut the paper along the exterior pattern lines.

2 Using the ruler and the pencil, draw in the lines where the paper will be folded. (These appear as dashed lines on the pattern.)

3 Dry paper will break when folded, so dampen the fold lines by dipping the paintbrush into the glass of water and running the wet brush along each fold line.

4 Fold the paper to make a box and glue together the sections represented by the shaded portions of the pattern.

An inexpensive picture frame from your local discount mart makes a fine base for a one-of-a-kind paper covering.

Paper-Covered Frames

WHAT YOU NEED

Several sheets of damp handmade paper (see "Handmade Paper with Natural Materials" on page 175)

1 roll of plastic wrap

2½-inch-wide paintbrush

Picture frame, any size

White craft glue

Small sponge, dampened with water

Clear polyurethane

WHAT YOU DO

1 To accumulate sheets of damp paper, complete Steps 1 through 10 of "Handmade Paper with Natural Materials" on page 175 and, as you remove the paper sheet from the mold, press it between towels. Then place the damp sheet on a flat piece of plastic wrap. Cover it with a second sheet of plastic wrap. As you make more sheets, continue to build the stack by layering sheets of paper and plastic wrap.

2 Use the paintbrush to coat the frame with a layer of the white craft glue.

3 Using your fingers and a damp sponge, shape the sheets of paper around the frame, carefully tearing them into smaller pieces to make them more manageable. Be sure to overlap the paper at every seam. Pat the paper-wrapped frame with the damp sponge to smooth its surface.

4 Place the frame in a warm, dry location to dry. As the paper dries, it will shrink and cling tightly to the frame. After the paper-coated frame has dried thoroughly, paint it with one thin coat of clear polyurethane.

PINE NEEDLES

Seminole Indians, deep in the Florida Everglades, were among the first people to fashion longleaf pine needles into functional vessels; but European immigrants later contributed to the ancient craft of pine-needle basketry by incorporating their knowledge of new materials, such as raffia. With each succeeding generation of pine-needle crafters, new designs and new materials have been introduced, but the basic coiling method used by the earliest pine-needle basket makers is the same one that is used today.

Pine Needles

Pine needles actually grow in clusters of two or three needles, which are held together by a cap, or sheath (see Figure 1). The group of clusters that you'll make as you gather your needles is called a bundle.

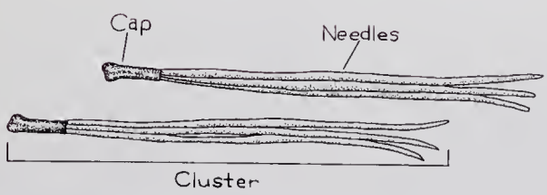


Figure 1

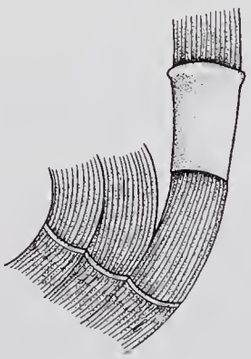


Figure 2

If you live in an area where pine trees are abundant, by all means gather the needles yourself. Needles suitable for pine-needle crafts are listed at the bottom of this page. If none of these pine trees grow in your area, you can order the needles by mail (see "Supply Sources" on page 254).

Gather your needles from the ground, any time between midsummer and late fall; they should be mature and light brown in color. Choose only whole needles, rejecting any that are broken. Make bundles, securing each one with a rubber band. A bundle 9 inches in circumference will weigh approximately one pound. You may store the bundles for future use but only if the needles in them are completely dry.

Preparing the Needles

The night before you're ready to start your project, cover the pine needles with boiling water to sterilize and soften them. Allow the needles to soak for not more than 30 to 45 minutes; excessive soaking will cause them to swell. Soak only the number that you'll use within the next day or two. Pour off the water, shake the needles to remove the remaining drops, and wrap the needles in a towel for several hours.

Check the instructions for the project you'll be making to see whether or not the caps will need to be removed from the needles. To remove the caps, either pull them off with your fingers or scrape them off with a dull knife.

Gauge

A gauge (see Figure 2) is a hollow piece of copper or aluminum tubing, usually about 1 inch long, that is used to keep the pine needles in place while you work with them. The gauge also ensures that your pine-needle coil is of uniform thickness. Homemade gauges can be made from plastic soda straws or the metal bands from pencils.

Best Pine Needles for Crafting

COMMON NAME	LATIN NAME	NEEDLE LENGTH
Digger pine	*Pinus sabiniana*	8 to 12 inches
Jeffrey pine	*Pinus jeffreyi*	5 to 10 inches
Loblolly pine	*Pinus taeda*	6 to 9 inches
Longleaf pine	*Pinus palustris*	10 to 15 inches
Ponderosa pine	*Pinus ponderosa*	4 to 7 inches
Slash pine	*Pinus caribaea*	8 to 12 inches

Pine-Needle Pencil Holder

What You Need

About 8 ounces (6½-inch-diameter bundle) of pine needles, 5 to 6 inches long

Sharp knife

Empty cardboard salt container, about 4 inches in diameter

Dark brown spray paint (optional)

Cotton darning needle

Black nylon upholstery thread

Pliers

Rubber band

Sharp scissors

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Cones, acorns, nuts, or pods for decoration

Acrylic spray or shellac

Enough felt to line the salt container

What You Do

1 Using a sharp knife, cut the top off the empty salt container to create a 4-inch-tall base for your pencil holder.

2 Remove the wrapper from the container so it won't show through the pine needles. If the wrapper won't come off, use dark brown spray paint to disguise it, if desired.

3 In this project, the caps are left on the pine-needle clusters. Thread the darning needle with the nylon upholstery thread. Then, using a cross-stitch pattern, sew one bundle of five to seven pine needles to the outside of the container, with the caps extending above the container's rim (see Figure 1). Start by pushing the darning needle out through point A, with the thread knotted on the inside of the container. (You may need to use pliers to pull the needle through the cardboard.) Cross over the bundle and insert the needle at point B. Come out again at point D and cross over to enter at point C. After inserting the needle through point C, push it out again at point B and under the thread at point C. The needle should now be on the outside of the holder, ready to stitch the next bundle in place.

4 Continue sewing small bundles around the entire container, keeping their caps even and close together so that the container underneath won't show. When the container is covered with bundles, secure the thread by tying a double-overhand knot inside the container (see Figure 2 on page 185).

To turn this attractive pencil holder into a flower vase, just arrange your bouquet in a small, water-filled jar and slip the jar into the holder.

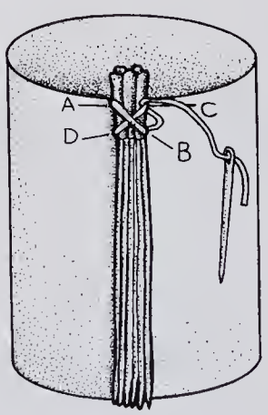


Figure 1

Figure 2

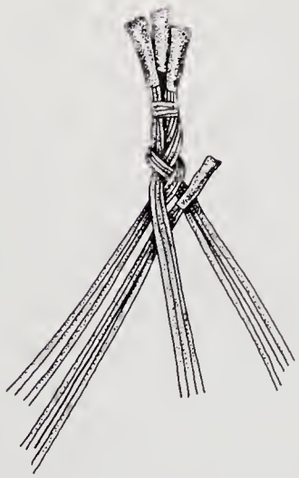


Figure 3

5 Place a rubber band around the pencil holder to keep the pine needles straight. Using the scissors, trim the needles so that they are even with the bottom of the container. Then stitch the needles to the bottom of the pencil holder, using the method described in Step 3 on page 183.

6 To make the braids, begin by tying three clusters of needles together just below their caps with the upholstery thread (see Figure 2). Braid the clusters twice and then add another cluster, with the cap end positioned as shown in Figure 3. Braid the clusters two more times and add another cluster. Continue to work in this fashion until the braid is long enough to wrap around the pencil holder.

7 Braid a few more times without adding any new clusters and tie off the end of the braid by wrapping it several times with upholstery thread. Knot and cut the thread and pull the braid taut to straighten it. Then use sharp scissors to cut the excess needles off below the tie and to trim away all loose needle ends. Stitch the completed braids to the bottom and top of the pencil holder, using the photograph on page 183 as a placement guide.

8 Hot-glue or sew small cones or other decorative materials to the front of the pencil holder.

9 Apply a heavy coat of acrylic spray or shellac to the entire outside surface of the holder to protect it and let dry.

10 To line the interior of the pencil holder, cut a piece of felt to size and hot-glue it to the exposed cardboard.

Pine-Needle Basket

WHAT YOU NEED

About 6 ounces (5¾-inch-diameter bundle) of pine needles, any length

Dull knife

Black nylon upholstery thread

Sharp scissors

Cotton darning needle

Gauge

Acrylic spray or shellac

Lint-free cloth

This small but gracefully shaped basket makes a lovely display piece for any sideboard or small table.

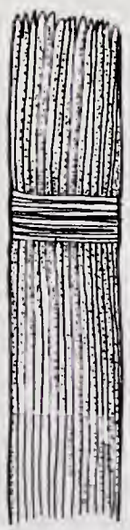


Figure 1

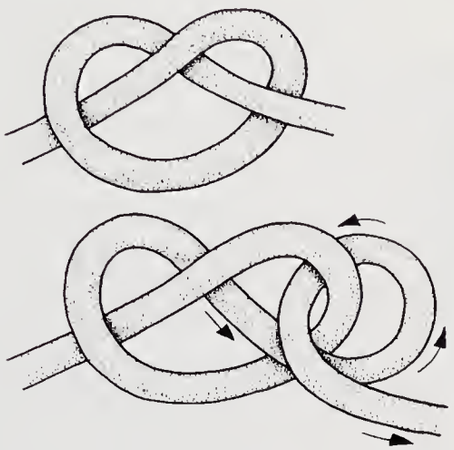


Figure 2

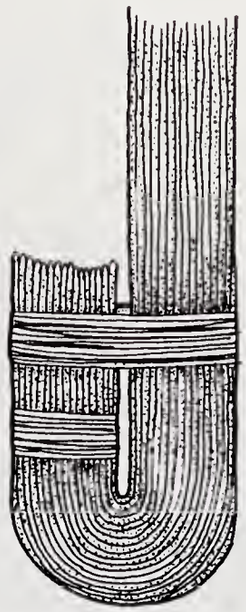


Figure 3

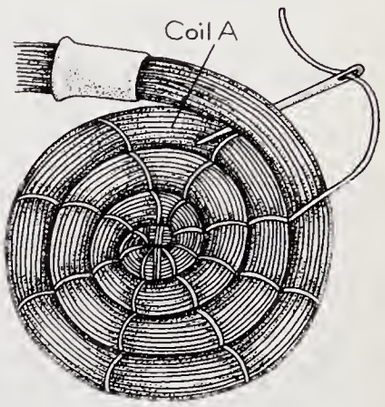


Figure 4

What You Do

1 Use your dull knife to remove the caps from the pine-needle clusters. Then form a bundle of three clusters.

2 Wrap one end of a 1½ to 2 yard length of thread around the end of the bundle, about ½ inch from the previously capped ends (see Figure 1). Knot the thread securely with a double-overhand knot (see Figure 2). Cut off the short end of the thread and trim the whitish ends of the needles as close to the thread as possible. Then thread the opposite end of the thread into your darning needle.

3 To start the basic pine-needle coil for the basket's base, fold the stitched end of the bundle over on top of itself and wrap the thread around the folded portion, stitching through the folded needles to hold the thread in place (see Figure 3). Then start the continuous back-to-front plain stitches that hold the coil to itself as you wind it. To make these stitches, first study Figure 4. Always start by inserting the darning needle from the back of the work on the right side of the established stitch. Catch about ½ inch of Coil A, then push the needle out the front side of the work, on the left side of the same stitch. Keep the stitches about ¼ inch apart. As you continue, you will need to add more pine needles. Insert single pine needles at first, adding them a few at a time by tucking their ends into the center of the bundle.

4 After you've stitched the third or fourth row of the coil, slip the gauge over the loose end of the pine-needle bundle, locating its flared end away from the stitched coil. Then, as you continue to work, keep moving the gauge along the bundle, just ahead of where you are stitching. Every two or three stitches, add as many needles as necessary to keep the gauge snug, making sure to tuck their whitish ends into the middle of the coil. Check the stitched coil periodically; if you see any whitish pine-needle ends protruding, use your darning needle to tuck them back into the coil. Keep the stitched coil as flat as possible.

5 Once you have finished coiling and stitching the base of the basket, begin to layer the coil upward to form the vertical basket sides. Note that each succeeding layer should be positioned so that the sides of the basket will flare outward at the top. Count the layers as you go; when you reach nine on one side of the basket and eight on the other, proceed to the next step.

Designer Tip

When you are sewing pine-needle coils and your thread runs short, just knot a new piece to the end and hide the knot by pulling it to the upper outside edge of the coil. Hold the tied section along with the pine-needle bundle and lap the next stitch over the tied ends to secure them in place. The next layer of coil will disguise the knot by covering it.

Figure 5

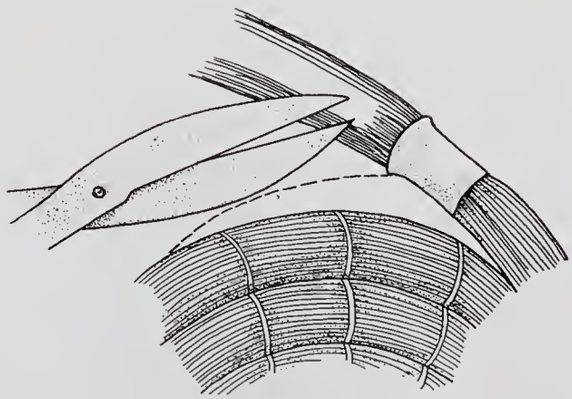


Figure 6

6 On the side that has nine layers, bend the coil upward to form the handle. Wrap the thread on a diagonal along the length of the coil to bind the pine needles together (see Figure 5). Shape the handle so that it arcs over the basket and then continue to stitch the coil to form the ninth layer on the other side of the basket.

7 As you approach the finishing point of your basket, where the end of the coil meets the point at which the handle first rises up to form an arc, you will need to taper the coil end to blend into the layer beneath it. Just before you reach this finishing point, stop adding needles to the gauge. If the coil is still too thick to form a taper, trim a few needles from the center of the bundle (see Figure 6). Stitch the end of the coil in place and trim any loose needle ends close to the last stitch, leaving the thread and darning needle attached for the next step.

8 To form the X-shaped stitching pattern around the upper rim of the basket and over the handle, simply stitch backwards, overlapping your previous stitches to form an X at each one. When you've completed these stitches, finish by running the thread back through the last few complete stitches.

9 To finish the basket, apply a heavy coat of shellac or acrylic spray to the outside surface. When the coating has dried, rub the basket briskly with a lint-free cloth to remove any loose pine-needle ends.

POTPOURRI

Do the smells of freshly baked spice cookies or fresh lavender and rose petals stir warm memories of your childhood? Do you enjoy a fragrant home but want a healthy alternative to chemical-laden air fresheners? Why not learn the art of blending potpourri? These aromatic combinations of dried materials can be mixed in endless variations. In fact, some potpourri recipes call for nothing more than common grocery-store items, such as oranges, apples, and spices. You might even want to create your own personal blend.

Potpourri recipes vary widely, but most include the following four basic classes of materials:

- Fragrant flowers, fruits, herbs, and spices
- Nonfragrant but colorful materials, often with interesting textures
- Fixatives, which are natural materials that absorb and hold fragrances (orrisroot and cellulose fibers are two of the most common)
- Natural or synthetic fragrance oils to augment natural aromas

If you don't grow and dry your own fragrant and nonfragrant materials, purchase dried materials from your local craft-supply store, florist, or grocery store. You'll find fixatives and fragrance oils at many health-food and craft-supply stores.

Metal may react with potpourri ingredients, so when it's time to set the potpourri out on a sideboard or table, use only glass or plastic containers. To maintain vivid colors, protect the blend from bright light. Also, avoid placing open containers in front of fans or windows, or you'll discover more potpourri on your floor than in the bowl you so carefully filled!

Fading fragrances can be revived in different ways. Placing your potpourri in a humid room, such as a bathroom or kitchen, will allow airborne moisture to release the natural scents, or a few drops of aromatic oil will take the place of natural fragrances that have dissipated. But the simplest remedy is to crumble or crush the potpourri ingredients to expose new surfaces and release new scents.

The recipes provided here are designed to yield large quantities. For a handful or two of any recipe, just reduce the amount of each ingredient proportionately. If you plan to give potpourri sachets or decorative potpourri-filled containers as gifts, you'll probably want to make a full recipe.

Mixing Potpourri

MATERIALS

Potpourri ingredients (see the recipes on pages 188 and 189)

Large, nonmetal mixing bowl

Nonmetal mixing spoon

Large brown paper bag

Glass or plastic display container

WHAT YOU DO

1 Before mixing the dry ingredients, make sure that they have all been dried thoroughly (see "Drying" on page 72). If the recipe calls for a fixative, set it aside and place the other dry ingredients into the large, nonmetal mixing bowl.

2 Sprinkle the fixative (if required) on top of the ingredients in the bowl. Then add a few drops of the natural or synthetic oil called for in the recipe. Stir the ingredients thoroughly with the mixing spoon.

3 Place the potpourri in the paper bag. Roll up and close the top of the bag, then shake the contents well.

4 Roll the excess air out of the bag and place it in a dark location. Shake the bag once a day for a week; then shake it once a week for five weeks. Remove the potpourri and display it in any attractive glass or plastic container.

Spice 'n' Apple Potpourri

2 cups of dried chamomile flowers

2 cups of dried sage leaves, cut into pieces

1 cup of dried spearmint leaves, cut into pieces

1 cup of dried calendula flowers, cut into pieces

¼ cup of anise seeds

2 cups of dried apple pieces

1 cup of dried rose hips

½ cup of dried orrisroot pieces (fixative)

1 teaspoon of natural clove-bud oil

1 tablespoon of synthetic spice 'n' apple oil

Spicy Vanilla Potpourri

1 cup of star anise

1 cup of cinnamon-stick pieces

½ cup of nutmeg pieces

1 cup of whole cloves

1 cup of sandalwood pieces

2 vanilla beans, cut into pieces

1 cup of dried white globe amaranth

1 cup of dried pink globe amaranth

1 cup of cellulose fiber (fixative)

1 teaspoon of natural vanilla oil

Fragrant Garden Potpourri

1 cup of dried rose petals

1 cup of dried lavender buds

1 cup of dried orange peel

1 cup of dried rosemary, cut into pieces

½ cup of dried hibiscus blooms, cut into pieces

½ cup of whole cloves

½ cup of dried yellow yarrow heads, crumbled

Forest Fantasy Potpourri

1 cup of dried spruce needles, cut into ½-inch lengths

1 cup of dried rose hips

1 cup of dried rosemary needles

1 cup of dried lemon balm, cut into pieces

1 cup of dried bee balm heads, broken into pieces

1 cup of dried anise hyssop heads, stripped from stems

1 cup of dried pineapple sage blooms

1 cup of dried pepperberries

1 cup of dried pine needles, cut into ½-inch pieces

1 cup of dried white-pine cone petals

Several small sprigs of dried plume fern

½ cup of cellulose fiber (fixative)

20 drops of natural spruce oil

Fabulous Faux-Strawberry Potpourri

3 cups of dried oak moss, cut into pieces

2 cups of dried everlasting flowers

½ cup of cinnamon-stick pieces

1 cup of dried bay leaves, cut into pieces

1 cup of whole cloves

1 cup of dried rose petals

2 cups of dried 'Strawberry Fields' globe-amaranth heads

1 cup of cellulose fiber (fixative)

1 teaspoon of synthetic strawberry oil

1 teaspoon of natural rose-geranium oil

½ teaspoon of natural vanilla oil

For additional potpourri projects, *see "Sachets" on page 194.*

PRESSED FLOWERS & HERBS

Pressed flowers, plants, and herbs are delightful materials to use in nature-craft projects, and the pressing process is very simple. Basically you want to dry the plants as flat as possible. You can do this by using a purchased plant press or a heavy book.

Always pick the plants when they are at their best, well before they have peaked. This is true whether you are working with spring flowers or herbs, summer foliage, autumn leaves, or winter blooms.

When pressing plants, the materials must be in top condition so that they will hold up well and keep their shape and color. Pick more materials than you think you will use so that you will have a good selection, and be sure to pick a variety of plants.

There are many different types of flowers that press well, as indicated in "Flowers, Herbs, and Foliage for Craft Projects" on the opposite page. Look for small flowers with thin plant parts since it's hard to press large, bulky forms and still have them resemble their original appearance. Intricate blossoms or flowers with variegated colors, such as daisies and pansies, lend themselves well to pressing. Some flowers retain their color better than others. Experiment with the flowers you find. You may be surprised at how uncommon the common dandelion can look when it is pressed.

After you have gathered your plant materials, remove the foliage or blooms from the stems. Place each plant flat on a piece of porous paper, such as blotting paper or a paper towel. Arrange each piece into the appearance you want; once the plants dry, you will not be able to change their shape. Play Mother Nature now: Curve some stems, leave others straight, put an arch into others. This way, your pressed flowers will reflect the infinite variety of live, growing plants. Make sure the plants do not touch each other. Cover them with another piece of porous paper. Then put the plants and the papers into a commercial plant press, place them between the pages of a heavy book, or stack books on top of them (see the photograph on the left).

Depending on the thickness and the size of what you are pressing, the plant material can take from several days to nearly a month to dry completely.

When you work with your pressed flowers, make sure the scale of the plants is compatible with the use you envision for them. Try adding a few petals from one flower to embellish a different flower. Create a design with a single stem of blossoms, or break off the blooms and scatter them. Imagine that the pressed flowers are your paints and create a bold and inventive still life.

This beautiful notecard was made by gluing pressed pansies to handmade paper with a spray adhesive.

Pressed flowers add beauty to even the simplest project. To create the note cards on page 192, pansies were glued (just a tiny dab, please) to handmade paper (see "Handmade Paper with Natural Materials" on page 175). To embellish a plastic frame box, glue pressed ferns to the cardboard backing, cover the backing with tissue wrapping paper, and paint the surface with white craft glue. Trim the paper to fit the frame, let it dry, and you have a lovely background for framing any special photograph. The two projects in this section are variations of these easy approaches.

Flowers, Herbs, and Foliage for Craft Projects

Spring: carnation, clematis, crocus, ferns, honeysuckle, iris, Johnny-jump-up, morning glory, pansy, phlox (wild blue), primrose, squill, viola, violet, wallflower.

Summer: angelica, bachelor's-button, bay leaf, bee balm blooms, coneflower petals, cosmos, daisy, dandelion, feverfew, flax, geranium, impatiens, ivy, larkspur, lavender, marigold, oregano (blooms and foliage), Queen-Anne's-lace, roses (small flowers and buds), sage blooms, santolina, 'Silver King' and 'Silver Queen' artemisia, tarragon leaves, tickseed (annual), zinnia (single, not double varieties)

Fall: aster, calendula, chrysanthemum (single variety), goldenrod, hydrangea blooms, maple leaves

Winter: Christmas rose, winter jasmine

With these easy-to-make note cards, you can capture the fleeting beauty of summer flowers under the illusion of a light wrapping of parchment.

Pressed-Flower Note Cards

What You Need (for 1 card)

5 to 10 assorted pressed flowers

2 pieces of waxed paper, 12 inches square

1 two-ply white facial tissue

Cup or small bowl

Small wooden spoon

White glue mixed half and half with water

Soft camel-hair lacquer brush, 1 inch wide

Brown paper grocery bag

Scissors

Iron

1 sheet of light-colored drawing or writing paper, 8½ × 11 inches or smaller

12 inches of satin ribbon or gold cord, ¼ inch wide

What You Do

1 Place one piece of the waxed paper flat on your work surface. Arrange the pressed flowers attractively for the front of the card. Be sure that the flower arrangement is either in the center of the bottom half of the paper or in the center of the right-hand half of the paper because you will be folding the paper in half either horizontally or vertically to make the card.

2 Take one piece of the facial tissue, pull off one ply of the tissue, and place it over the pressed flowers arranged on the waxed paper. Be careful not to move the flowers.

3 In the cup or small bowl, mix the glue and water with the wooden spoon. With the camel-hair brush, carefully paint the glue mixture over the tissue, the flower arrangement, and the waxed paper. In order not to tear the delicate tissue paper, use small, light strokes and don't go back over any of the tissue. Be sure to paint the entire tissue, even where there are no flowers. The tissue will wrinkle some. When dry (after about 24 hours), the wrinkles will make the paper look like expensive, handmade paper.

4 Cut a slit down one side of the grocery bag and cut off the bottom of the bag so that you can fold it in half and it will lie flat. Place the other piece of waxed paper between the two layers of brown paper. Iron with a warm iron so that some of the wax will transfer from the waxed paper to the brown paper. Remove the waxed paper from between the folded brown paper. Fold the dry tissue-flower-and-waxed-paper sandwich in half the way the finished card will be folded and place it between the folded brown paper. Again, iron the brown paper. This time, the wax will transfer from the brown paper to the sandwich to give it a smooth finish.

5 Remove the folded tissue-paper sandwich. Fold the piece of colored drawing or writing paper in half and slip it inside the tissue-paper sandwich. If necessary, trim the tissue paper to fit.

6 At the center of the card's fold, make two small V-shaped cuts about 1 inch apart. Thread the ribbon or cording through the holes and tie a bow on the outside of the note card.

Decorated Potpourri Jar Lids

What You Need (for 1 lid)

3 to 5 assorted pressed flowers

Potpourri (see "Potpourri" on page 187)

1 sheet of white or light-colored paper, 8½ × 11 inches or smaller

Pencil

Glass jar with a lid

Scissors

1 piece of clear self-adhesive vinyl, 10 inches square

White craft glue

12 inches of ribbon or raffia

Create a welcome gift by dressing up a jar of potpourri with a simple, pressed-flower lid.

What You Do

1 On the piece of white or light-colored paper, trace around the lid you want to cover. Cut out this circle and arrange the pressed flowers on the paper.

2 Cut out a circle of clear self-adhesive vinyl 1 inch larger in diameter than the jar lid. Peel the backing from the self-adhesive circle and place it, centered, over the pressed flowers on the paper circle. Press the vinyl carefully and thoroughly to make sure it fully adheres to both the paper circle and the flowers.

3 Make a series of cuts around the decorated circle from the edge of the clear vinyl to the edge of the white or light-colored paper. These should look like tabs. Center the decorated circle over the lid and press the tabs around and under the lid to attach the cover to it.

4 Fill the jar with potpourri, and screw the lid back onto the jar. Glue a piece of ribbon or raffia around the rim of the lid, or if the rim of the lid is a color that you like, just tie a ribbon around the neck of the jar.

SACHETS

Sachets are small fabric bags filled with a fragrant blend of dried natural materials. Centuries ago, these scented bags often contained specific herbs used for specific purposes—herbs thought to repel insects, to invite sweet dreams, or to protect against the plague, for example. Today, most crafters use sachets simply for the wonderful fragrance that they magically bestow to objects nearby. No matter where a sachet is placed—in a linen closet or lingerie drawer or under an armchair cushion—its fragrance will fill the area.

Long ago the contents of sachets were ground to a fine powder. Today, finely chopped potpourri is used instead. Tightly woven, natural-fiber fabrics, such as cotton, linen, or silk, make the best sachet covers since even the larger bits and pieces that make up contemporary potpourri can leak through loosely woven fabrics.

The sachet project that follows serves a dual purpose. By using a decorative fabric and embellishing it with dried flowers or herbs, whole spices, and ribbons or lace, you'll create a decorative sachet that's worthy of display on an open shelf or guest-bedroom pillow. When made to the specifications given here, however, it also serves as a wonderfully refreshing bath scent.

If you plan to make a decorative sachet and set it on precious upholstery or in a treasured basket, you may want to sew a cotton liner into the sachet bag or place a protective covering inside the basket. Potpourri ingredients may stain if they leak from the bag or get wet. To rejuvenate the fragrance of any sachet, just crush its contents by squeezing the bag or gently tapping it with a tack hammer.

Hang this sachet under the hot-water tap of your tub or float it in your bath water for a fragrant break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Bath Sachet

What You Need (for 1 sachet)

¾ cup of your favorite potpourri blend, chopped finely (see "Potpourri" on page 187)

1 piece of cotton fabric, 4 × 10 inches

Iron

Sewing machine or needle and thread

Blunt-tipped tapestry needle

12 inches of cotton string

Cotton ball

10 inches of wide yellow ribbon

Figure 1

Figure 2

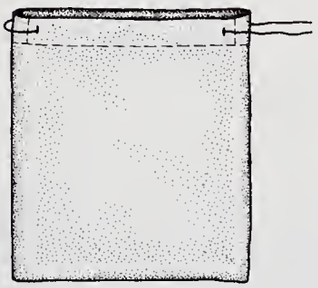


Figure 3

What You Do

1 With the wrong side of the fabric facing up, fold up each short edge ⅜ inch and press the folds with the iron (see Figure 1).

2 Create a casing by stitching each fold with a ¼-inch seam allowance.

3 With the right sides together, fold the fabric in half crosswise and press. Sew the two unstitched edges closed with a ¼-inch seam allowance (see Figure 2). Turn the bag right side out and press.

4 To make the drawstring, thread the tapestry needle with the cotton string. Insert the needle into the casing through the seam on one side. Being careful to leave a short thread tail hanging from the casing, run the cotton string through the casing, exiting the casing at the other seam and then entering the opposite casing. Run the thread through that casing and out of the bag (see Figure 3).

5 Remove the needle and fill the bag with the potpourri. Place the cotton ball on top of the potpourri to keep the ingredients from escaping. Tightly pull the drawstring closed and tie the ends in a double knot to secure the bag's contents.

6 To make the decorative bow, fold the ribbon in thirds, place it across the drawstring knot and tie it securely with the ends of the string.

7 Tie the loose ends of the drawstring together to create a loop to serve as a hanger. Hang the bag under the hot-water tap and run your bath water. Before bathing, remove the bag, squeeze it dry, and hang it on a towel rack to dry. The sachet ingredients will last for four or five baths.

Fast and Easy Sachets

Sachets can be any shape. To make small, decorative versions, use pinking shears to cut a circular piece of fabric, then place a handful of potpourri in its center (see "Potpourri" on page 187 and "Drying" on page 72). Using your fingers, gather the edges of the fabric together and tie the miniature sack closed with an attractive ribbon. Embellish as desired.

SEASHELLS

Combing a beach for seashells is as natural to us as swimming in the sea is to fish. But later we're faced with those mounting numbers of sandy collectibles, and we often don't have a clue what to do with them—other than stash them in a jar.

Fortunately, there are lots of craft projects that can put your beachcombing treasures to attractive use. For instance, you can make a picture frame from weathered-looking scrap wood and decorate it with shells, or you can cover a wooden box with shells and driftwood fragments, adding dried beach grass or rose-hip berries to create a beach scene.

If you're lucky enough to find large conch-type shells in perfect condition, fill them with melted beeswax or paraffin, allow the wax to set for five minutes, and then poke a birthday candle into the wax to create your own shell candles. Lightweight shells, such as scallop and small clams, can be strung from ribbon to make a delicate mobile. Shells also make lovely accents for floral wreaths: Spray paint them to coordinate or contrast with the overall color scheme. Glue tiny, dried flower blossoms to shells along with a ribbon for a hanger, and—*voila!*—Christmas tree ornaments.

The two projects that follow make imaginative use of shells and shell fragments. But please try not to buy shells from seaside shops or mail-order suppliers, where many, if not all, of the seashells are harvested by dredging, a process known to be harmful to ocean life. If you're low on shells, ask a friend!

Shell-Border Clay Pot

What You Need

20 flat, clean shell fragments

30 to 40 small, clean shells of different sizes, colors, and shapes

Ruler

Terra-cotta pot with a rim

Scissors

1 piece of scrap cardboard, 8 × 10 inches

Tile cutters

Epoxy glue

Masking tape

Several sheets of newspaper

Clear acrylic spray

The secret to this embellished pot is the shell-on-top-of-shell treatment.

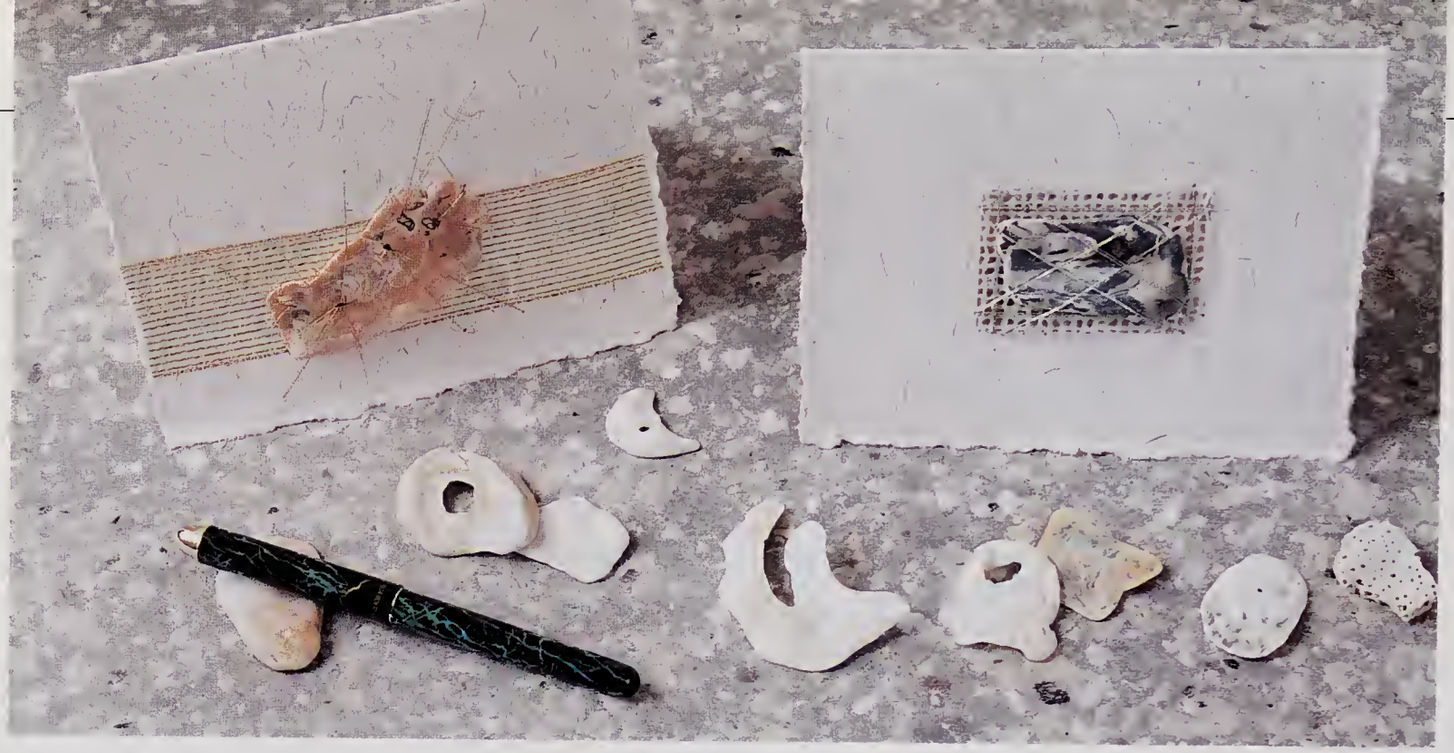
What You Do

1 Measure the height of the pot's rim and cut the scrap of cardboard to that size. You will use the cardboard as a template to size the shell fragments that will be applied to the rim of the pot.

2 If necessary, use the tile cutters to trim the shell fragments so they will fit the template. Make sure the sized fragments are not too wide because they will be hard to glue firmly. Arrange the sized fragments in a row on your worktable and experiment with different color patterns on your template. When you are satisfied with the arrangement, use epoxy glue to attach each fragment to the rim of the pot, following the glue manufacturer's directions. Remember, too much epoxy will ooze around the edges and look messy, and not enough will weaken the bond. After you have glued three or four fragments to the rim, allow them to dry. Then continue gluing the fragments around the rim, allowing time for each batch to dry before proceeding. Completely cover the rim of the pot.

3 Arrange the whole shells in front of you so that you can pick and choose among the different shapes and colors. Working with the larger shells first, begin gluing them on top of the shell-fragment border. Again, glue three or four shells at a time and allow them to dry before adding more shells. When you have circled the rim with the larger shells, fill in with as many small shells as you like. Allow the glue to dry completely (about three hours).

4 Cover the bare portion of the pot by wrapping and taping newspaper around it, starting underneath the rim and wrapping it under the bottom of the pot. Working in a well-ventilated space, spray the rim with acrylic to give the shells a somewhat shiny appearance.



Hand deliver these elegant cards to add a personal touch and to protect their fragile beauty.

Shell Greeting Cards

What You Need (for 1 card)

1 flat, clean shell or shell fragment, preferably with tiny holes made by insects

1 blank envelope to fit the desired card size

Ruler

1 piece of heavy-grade paper, like artist's stock, handmade paper, or oriental-style paper, twice the size of the desired card

Scissors

6 inches of satin, mesh, or sheer ribbon, 1 inch wide

Clear-drying white glue

Sewing needle

Metallic or silk sewing thread

What You Do

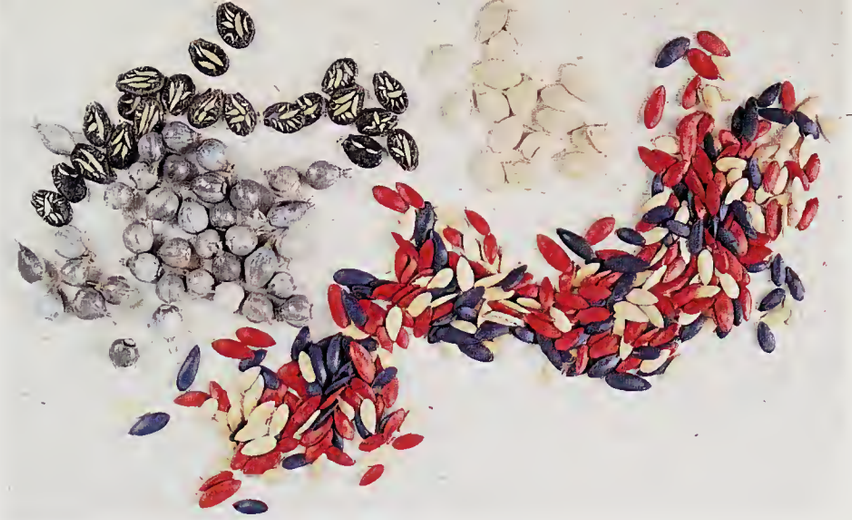
1 To determine the size paper you will need for a single-fold card, measure the envelope's width and double its height, then subtract about ¼ inch from both measurements. Now cut or tear the paper to size. Tearing creates a unique deckle edge with a more natural appearance than cutting. To ensure an even tear, crease the paper sharply before tearing it. Then fold the paper in half to create the card.

2 Cut the ribbon to fit the height or the width of the card. Lightly glue the ribbon in place on the front of the card and allow it to dry for five minutes.

3 Determine where you want to place the flat shell or shell fragment on the front of the card. Then lightly glue the shell to the card. When the glue has dried (at least 15 minutes), "embroider" the shell or shell fragment to the card with the metallic thread. Make your first stitch from the inside of the card to the outside, leaving a 2-inch tail of thread. Stitch through the paper and around or through any holes in the shell. This is best accomplished with long, straight stitches, randomly wrapping the shell to hold it in place. As you work, you may want to add random stitches along the ribbon, too. (The card pictured above has a piece of mica instead of ribbon.)

4 When you have completed the embroidery, make a last stitch from the outside of the card to the inside, next to your first stitch. Trim this thread and the 2-inch tail to ¼ inch and attach them to the card with small dabs of glue.

SEEDS



Hundreds of seed varieties are available for you to use in your nature crafts, and many of them are free for the asking. If you plant a garden each year, remember to let some of your plants go to seed. If you aren't the gardening type, just ask a neighbor to let you raid her melon beds, or you can harvest wild seeds while taking a leisurely autumn stroll down a country lane. Protect our wild flora, however, by limiting your harvests to common species and never take more than one-third of any type of seed you find. Please be considerate and be sure to seek permission before harvesting from private property.

The two projects in this section use only a few types of seeds—Job's tears, gourd, cantaloupe, and white millet (sold as wild birdseed). But no matter what kinds of seeds find their way into your workshop, be sure to clean, dry, and sterilize them before storing or using them. Neglecting these critical steps will encourage molds, insects, and larvae in your finished projects. Gather the seeds in the fall, rinse them thoroughly, and spread them out on newspapers or screens to dry. Then place them in a single layer on a cookie sheet and bake them at 200°F for 25 minutes. Store the sterilized seeds in brown paper bags or in airtight containers that will protect them from light.

If the natural colors of your harvested seeds aren't eye-catching enough for you, consider using fabric dyes to perk them up. Just prepare the dye according to the instructions on the package or bottle and then soak the cleaned seeds in the dye.

Ordinary seeds form the basis for these colorful necklaces.

Seed Necklaces

What You Need
(for each necklace)

- 60 Job's tears or gourd seeds
- 180 cantaloupe seeds, dyed
- 2 yards of strong thread
- Sewing needle
- Scissors

WHAT YOU DO

1 Thread the needle and knot the thread ends together. Using the photograph on page 199 as a guide, string a Job's tear or gourd seed onto the thread, followed by three cantaloupe seeds. Repeat this sequence until the necklace is your desired length.

2 Using the scissors, cut the thread, tie the ends together, and trim away any excess thread.

Refrigerator Magnets

WHAT YOU NEED (for 1 magnet)

18 or 19 cantaloupe seeds, dyed, natural-colored, or both

6 to 8 white-millet seeds or other small seeds

White craft glue

¾-inch-diameter, stiff cardboard circle

Clear spray varnish

¾-inch-diameter magnet

WHAT YOU DO

1 On one surface of the cardboard circle, apply a ring of glue close to the outer edge. Position a ring of seeds on the ring of glue, setting the seeds side by side with about two-thirds of each seed projecting over the edge of the cardboard. Allow this ring of seeds to dry.

2 Apply another ring of glue to the cardboard just inside the first ring of seeds. Also apply a tiny bit of glue to the inner tip of each seed in the previously glued ring. Using the photograph as a guide, add a second ring of seeds, positioning each one at a slight upward angle and pressing its pointed tip into the circle of glue. Allow the glue to dry.

3 Place a drop of glue in the center of the cardboard and press the small millet seeds lightly into it. Allow the glue to dry.

4 Spray the completed seed arrangement with clear varnish.

5 When the varnish has dried, glue the magnet to the back of the cardboard.

These tiny circles of color will keep your grocery lists or favorite snapshots right where you can see them.

SWAGS

A hanging cluster of herbs, flowers, or other natural materials can beautify any room in your home. But when you personally design and detail your swag, it becomes spectacular.

Generally, swags are bouquets that hang on a wall, cabinet, or mantle. They are similar to garlands, although garlands are usually longer, thinner, and more ropelike. Sometimes the simplest swags are the most pleasing, but swags can also be strikingly complex. Swags are a time-honored tradition; in fact, simple swags—circles of dried flowers—have been excavated from 4,000-year-old pyramids.

The simplest swags are made from bunches of fresh flowers or herbs gathered at the stems and hung to dry. A bow may be added for accent or decoration.

Horizontal swags feature more sophisticated designs but are still fairly simple to make. They are constructed by dividing the base materials into two matching bunches, placing the bunches end to end with the stems overlapping, and wiring the stems together. This creates a symmetrical effect, and the center focal point can be imaginatively decorated with other flowers, leaves, herbs, and ribbons.

Another type of swag uses an object, such as a straw broom or twig form, as a base that is then dressed up to create a rich wallhanging. The design of this type of swag is limited only by the extent of your imagination.

Flowers add color to swags; herbs add fragrance; and grasses, seeds, and pods add interest. Any swag made from fresh herbs will be transformed when it dries—after several weeks, the swag becomes a fragrant, edible hanging garden (see "Hanging" on page 74).

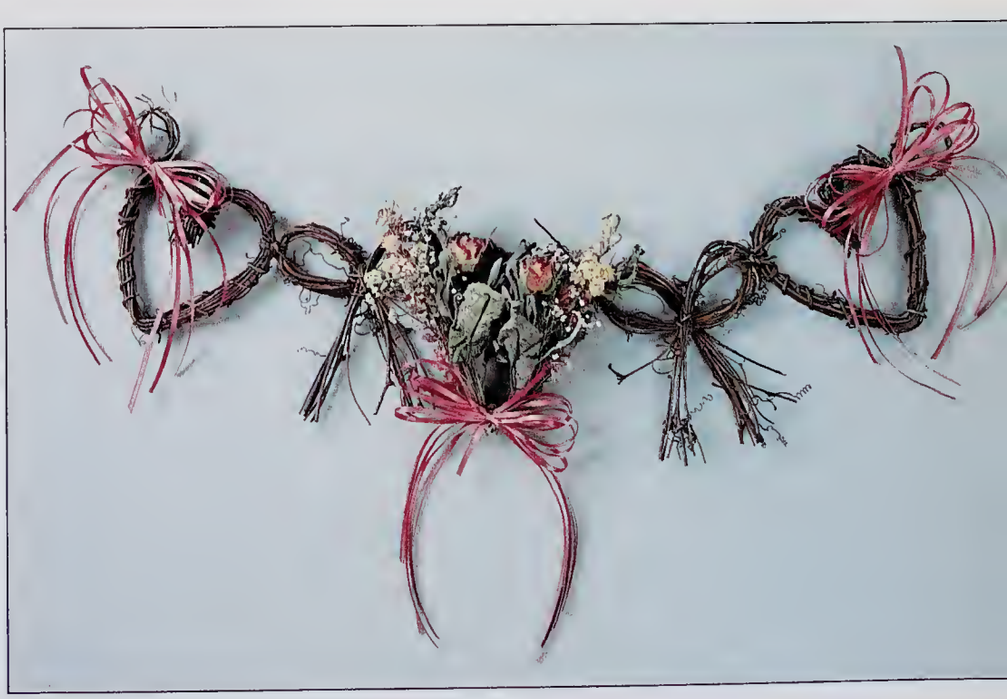
Swags make charming seasonal decorations. For Christmas, combine hemlock, cranberries, nandina, spruce, and holly. In the spring, hang hyacinths, dogwood, willow, forsythia, or quince. And nothing makes a more touching gift than a swag created for a special occasion. Familiarize yourself with the ancient or traditional meanings behind herbs and flowers, and then craft a distinctive and special gift (see "The Victorian Language of Flowers" on page 101).

When creating a swag, pay attention to elements of color, texture, structure, and fragrance. Experiment with a variety of elements. Be creative. You need only look in your yard, garden, or pantry to find natural materials that, when gathered and assembled, become works of art. Capture and preserve the bounty of any season of the year by including it in your swag.

Window Swag

WHAT YOU NEED

- 22-inch-long heart-and-bow grapevine swag with 3 hearts and 2 bows (available at craft-supply stores)
- 2 stems of dried mint, 6 inches long
- 2 stems of dried pink larkspur, 5 inches long
- 2 stems of dried feverfew, 5 inches long
- 4 stems of dried lavender, 4½ inches long
- 4 sprigs of baby's-breath, 4½ inches long
- 2 stems of dried sage, 4½ inches long
- 2 dried pink rosebuds, with stems 4½ inches long
- Scissors
- 9 yards of satin ribbon, ¼ inch wide
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks



This delicate, Victorian arrangement would make a perfect gift for Valentine's Day or for a friend's bridal shower.

What You Do

1 Cut the satin ribbon into six 12-inch-long pieces, three 5-inch-long pieces, and three 78-inch-long pieces. Using one 78-inch length of ribbon, make a simple loop bow with six loops on each side (see "Bows" on page 46). The bow should measure about 4½ inches wide. Place two 12-inch lengths of ribbon at the base of the bow and tie them to the bow using a 5-inch-long ribbon. Repeat this step to make two more bows. Hot-glue one bow to each end of the swag, referring to the photograph on this page. Set aside the third bow for later use.

2 Divide all the dried materials into two equal piles and wire each pile together so that you have identical bundles. Hot-glue each bundle securely to a side of the center heart. Be sure the rosebuds are placed so that they are facing one another.

3 Hot-glue the remaining bow at the bottom of the center heart to hide the stems of the dried flowers.

Kitchen Herb Swag

Culinary ingredients are within easy reach with this charming swag, and it provides a perfect decorating touch, too.

What You Need

- 13 stems of dried Mexican bush sage, 24 inches long
- 7 stems of dried sage, 29 inches long
- 3 stems of dried chili peppers, 6 to 10 inches long, with 6 to 8 peppers per stem
- 21 stems of dried oregano, 8 inches long
- 3 garlic bulbs, with the stems braided together
- 5 stems of dried yarrow, 4 to 7 inches long
- 8 strands of raffia, 52 inches long
- Rubber bands
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

What You Do

1 Working on a flat surface, arrange each group of the dried materials into a separate fan shape. Place the fan of Mexican bush sage on top of the sage, stems together, and bunch the two types of sage together with a rubber band.

2 Place the chili-pepper fan on top of the Mexican bush sage and layer the oregano fan on top of the peppers. Use a second rubber band to join all four groups of stems together.

3 Place the garlic braid on top of the oregano stems and adjust the bulbs so that they are nestled in the center of the oregano. Bend the end of the braid around the stems to form a loop.

4 Lay the eight strands of raffia under the swag and perpendicular to it. Wrap the raffia around all of the stems twice. Tie the raffia in a secure knot. Lift up two strands of the raffia from each side and tie a bow around the stems.

5 Arrange the yarrow stems at different heights under the chili peppers and oregano. Once the yarrow stems are positioned where you want them, remove each stem gently, apply hot glue to the end, and replace it in the swag.

A swag is still a swag, even when the bunches of herbs are resting on a straw broom or other interesting background.

Herbal Broom

What You Need

1 straw broom, 36 inches long

1 stem of dried miniature Australian ivy, 21 inches long

3 pieces of dried cornhusk

1 stem of weed pods, 16 inches long

3 stems of dried red chili peppers, 10 to 13 inches long

3 garlic bulbs, with stems braided together

Rubber bands

13 strands of raffia, 60 inches long

What You Do

1 Using the same layering technique as described in the "Kitchen Herb Swag" on the opposite page, gather and layer the materials onto the broom as follows: Australian ivy, cornhusk pieces, weed pods, chili peppers, and garlic bulbs. Use rubber bands as needed to secure the stems.

2 Center all 13 strands of the raffia under and perpendicular to the broom. Bring each side of the raffia up toward the middle, cross the raffia over the broom, and wrap it securely around the broom handle. Repeat this wrapping step two more times and tie the raffia ends into a strong knot over all of the materials. Using four raffia strands from each side of the broom, tie a bow in the center of the swag. Trim the raffia strands even with the bottom of the broom. With a leftover piece of the raffia, tie the garlic braid securely to the broom handle about 4 inches above the bow.

Victorian Twig Swag

WHAT YOU NEED

13 × 32-inch Victorian twig base (available at craft-supply stores)

80 dried eucalyptus leaves

16 stems of dried lavender, 6 inches long

1 stem of dried winged everlasting, 6 inches long

1 sprig of baby's-breath, 6 inches long

2 large dried hydrangea flower heads

40 dried rose-colored globe amaranths

1 stem of dried hyacinth, 8 inches long

3 yards of pink wired ribbon, 1½ inches wide

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Scissors

WHAT YOU DO

1 Hot-glue the eucalyptus leaves to the twig base along the horizontal axis, starting at the outside and working toward the center. Overlap and vary the angle of the leaves as you proceed inward. Leave a 4-inch gap in the center for the bow. Glue a few more leaves up the center oval to the midpoint of the oval.

2 Cut the lavender and winged everlasting stems, and the sprig of baby's-breath into small pieces, 1 to 2 inches long. Break apart the hydrangea into small blooms of 1 to 2 inches wide. Assemble groups of these flowers, adding the globe amaranth, and hot-glue them to the twig base, hiding the stems with other blooms.

3 Cut the ribbon into four lengths, one measuring 24 inches, one 2 inches, and two lengths of 41 inches each. Make a deep V-shaped cut on one end of each of the 41-inch lengths. Make four loops with the 24-inch length and attach the looped ribbon to the base (between the break in the leaves) by wrapping the 2-inch piece around the center to create a bow and gluing the ends of the 2-inch piece to the back of the base.

4 Glue the V-shaped end of one 41-inch ribbon to the back of the twig base at the far right-hand edge. Make sure the V-shaped portion sticks up through the leaves. Drape the ribbon beneath the bottom of the twig base and curve and bend it all the way to the center of the swag. Glue the end of the ribbon to the base underneath the bow. Repeat the process on the left-hand side of the swag.

5 Cut the hyacinth stem into pieces 1 to 3 inches long and hot-glue them over any glue spots in the swag, into the folds of the ribbon, and on any remaining bare spots.

Flowing ribbon interlaced with flowers on a curly twig base gives this swag its delicate and ornate appearance.

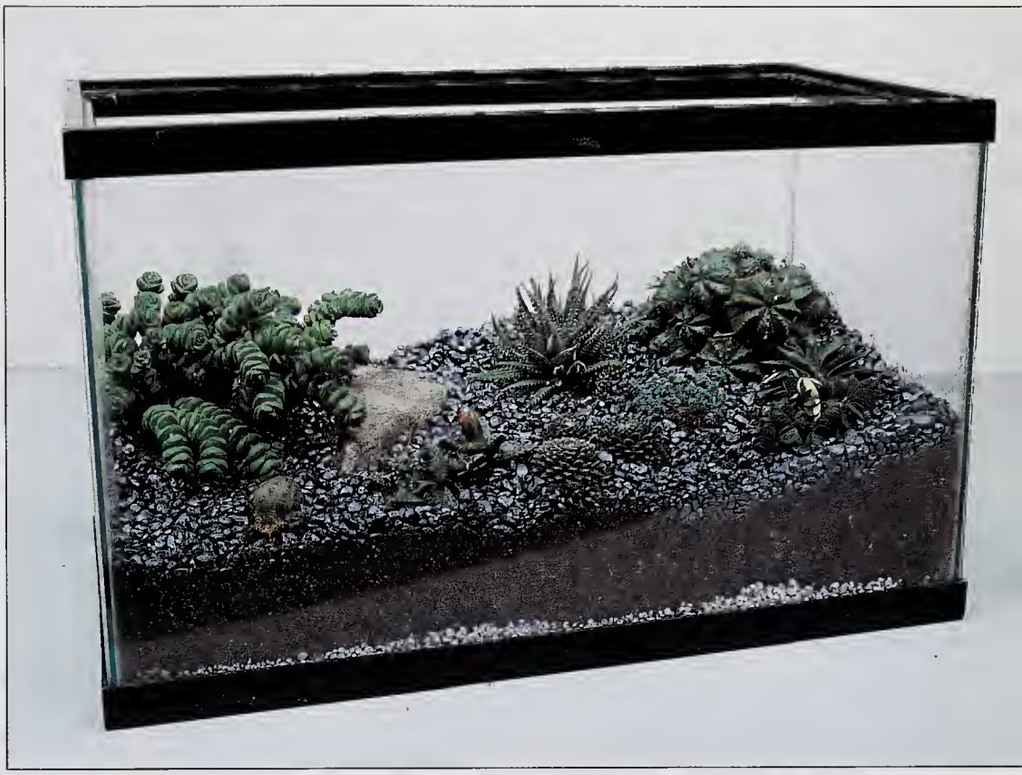
TERRARIUMS

The easiest way to bring the outdoors indoors is with a terrarium—a transparent, plant-filled container. The opening of a typical terrarium is either covered or quite small, and provides the secret to the terrarium's success: a controlled climate of constant humidity. When water vapor inside the container comes in contact with the glass sides, it cools, condenses, and trickles down into the soil, creating a self-watering system that needs only occasional replenishment. With minimum care and attention, a terrarium will flourish indefinitely.

Originally, terrariums were glass bowls filled with mosses, ferns, and small woodland plants such as partridgeberry, wild ginger, and rattlesnake plantain. These woodland plants were brought indoors during the autumn to provide greenery and red berries during the cold winter months. Fortunately, we are now more sensitive to endangered species and generally purchase woodland plants from nurseries instead.

The terrarium project in this section is not based on the traditional closed ecosystem, which recaptures a great deal of moisture as condensation. Instead, we've used succulents, the low-moisture needs of which are met almost entirely by the inevitable condensation on the aquarium's glass walls. (A lid is recommended for this project but is optional.) This condensation, much like the dew that forms in the desert at night, will provide almost all of the water the plants need. Cacti also make excellent terrarium plants. Just be sure never to combine cacti and succulents in the same terrarium since they require different moisture levels.

The succulents selected for this project require about 12 hours of bright light each day, so locate the finished project near an open window or supplement the sunlight by attaching fluorescent lights to the aquarium lid or by hanging them directly over the uncovered container. Under ideal conditions, your succulents may even flower!



The varied, sculptural forms of succulents make it possible to compose beautiful interior landscapes that will change only subtly over time.

Succulent Terrarium

What You Need

- 1 crassula
- 1 haworthia (star cactus)
- 1 euphorbia
- 1 gasteria (ox-tongue)
- 1 stapelia (carrion flower)
- 2 faucaria (tiger-jaws)
- 3 sempervivum (hens and chicks)
- 1 sedum
- Pen or marker
- 1 large sheet of cardboard
- 10-gallon glass aquarium (with lid optional)
- Glass cleaner
- Paper towels
- Perlite
- Large stone
- Smaller stones (optional)
- 3 cubic feet of good quality, peat-based potting soil
- Large spoon (optional)
- Thin-bladed knife
- Small, soft paintbrush
- Small quantity of colored or plain aquarium gravel or sand
- Spray bottle filled with water

WHAT YOU DO

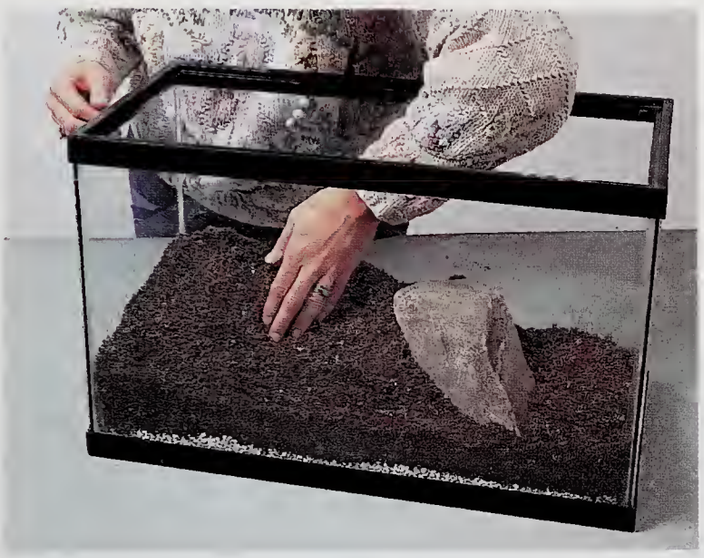
1 Assemble the plants and the materials. Use the glass cleaner and the paper towels to clean the aquarium inside and out. Allow the aquarium to dry thoroughly before proceeding.

2 Using the pen or the marker, draw a terrarium "floor plan" on the piece of cardboard, indicating where you want to place each plant as well as the decorative stone. Note that the floor plan in the photograph below and on the right depicts the numbered plants as follows:

#1 = Crassula
#2 = Haworthia
#3 = Euphorbia
#4 = Gasteria
#5 = Stapelia
#6 = Faucaria
#7 = Sempervivum
#8 = Sedum

3 Pour a 1-inch-thick layer of perlite into the bottom of the aquarium to allow for drainage.

4 Position the large stone on the perlite for a natural, decorative effect; use smaller stones, too, if desired. Then add potting soil, sculpting it as desired. Bury at least one-half of the stone as you add the soil, firming it lightly.



5 Using the cardboard layout as a location guide, excavate holes with the large spoon or your hands. Plant each succulent in turn, firming the soil around the roots. Be careful not to set the plants any deeper than they were in their pots. (To remove a plant from its plastic container, tap the sides of the container gently and run a thin-bladed knife around the inside surfaces. Cradling the plant in your hand, turn the pot upside down and gently remove the pot.)

6 Use a small, soft paintbrush to remove any dirt from the foliage. Spread plain or colored aquarium gravel in a thin layer over the soil surface, getting it as close as possible to the base of each plant. Substitute sand if you wish.

7 Using the spray bottle, mist the soil with one to two cups of water, applying it between the plants, not on them. Use paper towels to clean the inside of the glass. (If you've used woodland plants instead of succulents, use an aquarium lid, leaving it slightly cracked to provide fresh air.) Water only when the plants appear shrunken or shriveled or when the soil begins to pull away from the sides of the container.

TOOLS

As a nature crafter, you won't need a "high-tech" workshop. In fact, your complete tool set will probably fit into a kitchen drawer. What's more, many of these required tools may be lurking in your household already, just waiting to be put to creative use.

For descriptions of craft-specific tools, such as those used in basketry, simply turn to the section in which that craft is described. The tools listed here are the ones you'll need for almost every project in this book.

Clippers or Pruning Shears

For harvesting your own materials, for cutting stems to length, for snipping sprigs from stems, and for cutting basketry materials, a high-quality pair of garden clippers or pruning shears is a must.

Glue Guns

Glue guns are to nature crafters what wrenches are to mechanics—absolutely indispensable. These wonderful tools are available at any craft-supply or hardware store and are so useful that you'll wonder why every household doesn't own one. If you've never handled a glue gun before, take time to read the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

The gun-shaped tool, which accepts solid glue cartridges, plugs into any household receptacle. When its trigger is squeezed, a drop of hot liquid glue is released from the gun's conical tip. Available in a variety of sizes, and in hot-glue and cool-melt versions, glue guns are worth every penny of their cost—and they aren't expensive!

Hot-glue guns are especially useful for securing materials such as stemless blooms or small cones and pods; for adding bits of materials to fill in empty spaces in an arrangement; for securing large, light materials, such as slices of dried fruit; and for securing larger, wired items. Unless you're gluing small, last-minute additions to the outer surface of a base or arrangement, don't hesitate to use quite a bit of glue. You'll find that the gun may leave strands of excess glue behind as you work, but these are easily removed once they've dried.

Because hot-glue guns can cause painful burns when handled carelessly and because some materials are easily damaged by extremely hot glue, some crafters also purchase cool-melt glue guns, which make use of a glue that melts at lower temperatures.

Needle-Nose Pliers and Wire Cutters

Needle-nose pliers and wire cutters will also prove useful in your nature-craft workshop. You will use the wire cutters to cut floral wire to length and the needle-nose pliers to bend the wire into necessary shapes.

Ruler or Tape Measure

Many of the projects in this book require that stems be cut to certain lengths, so keep an 18-inch-long ruler or a short tape measure on hand. If you have a work surface that you use only for nature crafts, try this trick: Hot-glue a ruler right onto the surface itself. Then all you'll need to do is hold each stem next to the ruler with one hand while you snip the stem with clippers or pruning shears held in the other hand.

Scissors

Be sure to keep at least one sturdy, sharp pair of scissors on hand. You'll be cutting up a storm as you handle ribbons, slender sprigs of dried materials, corn husks, and many other nature-craft materials and supplies.

TOPIARIES

Topiary originally referred to the sixteenth century art of training and trimming trees and shrubs into unusual or ornamental shapes. Later, topiary included the shaping of wire into animal forms and other shapes that were filled with moss and then planted with fresh foliage. Contemporary topiary has added yet another variation: A polystyrene ball or cone, skewered on a stick and fastened into a pot, is covered with moss, dried flowers, and other natural materials. This is the topiary art that most of today's designers practice and that has come to be nearly synonymous with the word topiary.

Topiaries can be large or small, simple or extremely ornate, rustic or dressy, and made with fresh, dried, or artificial materials (or artful combinations of all three). What they share is their basic construction. In recent years, topiaries, such as the three projects included here, have become quite popular and offer nature crafters an appealing, easy way to decorate their homes and create welcome gifts.

Dried-Rose Topiary

What You Need

¾-inch-diameter green tree branch, as straight as possible and 12 inches long

3-inch-diameter grapevine wreath

1 piece of sheet moss, 12 inches square

5 bunches of dried red roses, 20 to 22 stems per bunch

Pruning shears

Ruler

1 small piece of plywood

Serrated knife

1 block of floral foam, 5 inches square

5-inch-diameter terra-cotta pot, 4 inches tall

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

5-inch-diameter polystyrene ball

WHAT YOU DO

1 Using the pruning shears, ruler, and plywood, cut both ends of the tree branch on a diagonal. Use the serrated knife to cut the floral foam to fit in the terra-cotta pot. Insert the foam into the pot.

2 Use one end of the branch to make a hole in the center of the floral foam in the pot. Remove the branch, generously cover the end of the branch with hot glue, and insert it back into the block of foam. Hold the branch for two minutes so the glue can set. Using the same process, attach the polystyrene ball to the other end of the branch.

3 Unwind the small grapevine wreath and clip a 15-inch piece of vine from it. Put hot glue on one end of the vine and insert that end into the foam in the pot, close to the tree branch. Wind the vine up the branch, put hot glue on the free end of the vine, and insert it into the bottom of the polystyrene ball.

4 Cover the top of the pot with the sheet moss. Then carefully cover the entire ball with the sheet moss, using dabs of hot glue to secure the pieces of moss, making sure that no foam is visible.

5 Use your fingers to strip all of the leaves from the rose stems and put the leaves aside. Using the pruning shears, trim two-thirds of the rose stems to varying heights, ranging from 1 to 3 inches. Trim a third of the stems right up to the rose.

6 Assemble clusters of two to three roses with stems of varying heights, and starting at the top of the moss-covered ball, insert the stems through the moss into the ball. Hot-glue the shortest stems and the roses with no stems directly to the moss. Hot-glue two or three of the rose leaves alongside each rose cluster. Continue in this manner until the entire ball is covered. Wherever there are gaps in the ball, fill in with the rose leaves. You may want to put the small clay pot into a larger, decorative pot, add more sheet moss at the foot of the topiary, and hot-glue three or four rose stems to the moss.

These magnificent twin topiaries add an elegant touch to any home and are easier to make than they appear to be.

Twin Topiaries

WHAT YOU NEED (for both topiaries)

- 2 green tree limbs of any kind of hardwood, 4 to 5 feet long and 3 inches in diameter
- 4 to 5 pounds of Spanish moss
- 350 to 700 sprigs of dried sweet Annie, 3 to 5 inches long
- 350 to 700 stems of dried lavender, 3 to 5 inches long
- 350 to 700 stems of dried dark blue larkspur, 8 to 16 inches long
- 240 to 480 stems of dried globe thistle, 3 to 5 inches long
- 40 stems of dried blue hydrangea, 3 to 5 inches long
- 24 stems of glycerin-preserved juniper, 4 inches long
- 120 to 240 stems of dried oregano, 3 to 5 inches long
- 120 to 240 sprigs of artemisia, 3 to 5 inches long
- 10 stems of dried salal leaves, 3 to 5 inches long
- Sharp knife
- Hand saw
- 2 plastic terra-cotta pots, 8 to 10 inches tall with 12-inch-diameter rims
- 1 sheet of plywood, ¼ inch thick
- Pencil
- Jigsaw
- Ruler
- Electric screw gun
- 10 drywall screws, six 2 inches long and four 1½ inches long
- Large bucket
- 1 pound of plaster of paris
- Water
- 2 polystyrene balls, 8 inches in diameter
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks
- Spool of medium-gauge floral wire
- Wire cutters
- 400 floral picks, trimmed to 4½ inches
- Garden gloves (optional)

What You Do

1 Carefully strip the bark off of the tree limbs with the sharp knife. On each limb, saw one end flat; use the knife to carve the other end to a point.

2 Place the bottom of one of the plastic pots on the sheet of plywood and trace around it. Now, pencil in another circle inside the traced circle but ¼ inch smaller in diameter. With the jigsaw, cut out the inner circle. Use the cut-out circle as the template for cutting a second circle the same size.

3 Use the ruler to find the center of the plywood circles, and mark with the pencil. To make it easier to use the screw gun and the screws, place one tree limb on its side. Center the flat end of the limb on one of the plywood circles, and use the screw gun to screw three 2-inch drywall screws through the circle and into the end of the limb. Repeat this step with the other tree limb and the other plywood circle.

4 Place the plywood circles with the attached limbs upright in the bottom of the plastic pots. Turn the pots on their sides and, using the electric screw gun, screw two 1½-inch-long drywall screws through the bottom of each pot. This makes all three pieces a single, stable unit.

5 In the large bucket, mix the plaster of paris with water according to the instructions on the package and fill both pots to about 4 inches from the top. When the plaster has set (at least five days), carefully press each polystyrene ball onto the sharpened end of a tree limb. Make sure the two mounted balls are about the same height. Squirt hot glue around the holes in each ball to securely bond the limbs to the balls.

6 Cover the balls with Spanish moss, using floral wire in a crisscross fashion to secure the moss. Tie off the wire as needed and trim it with the wire cutters.

7 Wash off any plaster residue from the outside of the pots. Fill the plastic pots with Spanish moss to cover the plaster. If you want, you can put the plastic pots into larger, more attractive containers to match your room decor; conceal the plaster and the plastic pots with Spanish moss.

8 Bundle the following floral materials with 5 to 10 stems of varying heights in each bundle. Make this quantity of bundles:

- 70 bundles of sweet Annie
- 70 bundles of lavender
- 70 bundles of larkspur
- 48 bundles of globe thistle
- 24 bundles of oregano
- 24 bundles of artemisia

9 Attach all the bundles of flowers and herbs to the trimmed floral picks. Then divide the bundles into two equal groups of materials—one for each topiary. Set one group aside. Work on one topiary with one-half of the materials at a time. Starting at the top of the ball, pick in a bundle of sweet Annie and insert four more bundles at the north, south, east, and west positions on the top of the ball. Continue adding sweet Annie evenly spaced around the ball to the base. As you near the equator of the ball, insert the picked flowers at a 90-degree angle.

10 Continue in the same manner by inserting the lavender bundles, picking in one lavender bundle near every sweet-Annie bundle. Repeat this process with the dark blue larkspur. The topiary should now resemble the shape of a ball that seems to radiate from the center. You should also be able to see empty spaces.

11 Pick in the globe thistle. (If desired, use gloves.) Be sure to include the most interesting globe thistle leaves. Then attach one-half of the hydrangea stems to picks and insert them into the ball. If some hydrangea stems are too short, hot-glue them directly to the ball. Insert the juniper stems and pick in the bundles of oregano and artemisia. Hot-glue the salal leaves to fill in any gaps on the ball. Repeat Steps 9 through 11 to decorate the other polystyrene ball.

Dress up a front-hall table with this rich, red fruit topiary, which can also serve as a decidedly different Christmas decoration.

Pomegranate Topiary

What You Need

Twig and grapevine topiary base*

1 piece of sheet moss, 8 × 10 inches

8 dried pomegranates

100 acorns or several bunches of artificial grapes

20 pieces of dried hydrangea blooms

Assorted mosses, lichens, and fungi (see "Harvesting Moss" on page 168)

Small bucket

1 pound of plaster of paris

Water

5 or 6 finger-size pieces of damp sponge

Terra-cotta pot or other container slightly larger than the diameter of the grapevine ball

Scissors

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Acrylic spray paints in red and black

Clear acrylic spray

Wire cutters

*A twig attached to a grapevine ball can be mail-ordered from suppliers (see "Supply Sources" on page 254) or through your local florist; several sizes are available.

What You Do

1 In the small bucket, mix the plaster of paris with the water according to the instructions on the package. Place the sponge pieces vertically all around the terra-cotta pot on the inside wall and pour in the plaster (the damp sponge pieces will adhere to the pot and keep the pot from cracking as the plaster dries and expands). Insert the topiary-base twig into the center of the plaster, pushing it all the way to the bottom of the pot. Make sure the twig is centered and straight. Hold it for five minutes until the plaster begins to set or prop it up with pieces of dry sponge. Allow the plaster to set (about five days).

2 With the scissors, cut the sheet moss into little pieces and hot-glue them to the grapevine ball, but don't cover the entire ball; much of the charm of this topiary is that the vine shows through.

3 Hot-glue the pomegranates onto the ball in an even but random distribution, checking to see that the placement looks even from all angles.

4 If you are using acorns, treat them as follows: Spray them with red acrylic paint and let them dry. Then stand about two feet away and mist the acorns with black paint to achieve a more cherry color. When they are dry, spray them with the clear acrylic. Allow them to dry and hot-glue them onto the ball. If you are using artificial grapes, simply hot-glue small bunches (use wire cutters to cut the grapes off the main bunch) onto the ball.

5 Fill in the topiary ball with hydrangea blooms, mosses, lichens, and fungi, using hot glue to secure the pieces.

6 Cover the opening of the pot with sheet moss. Decorate the pot by hot-gluing a few lichens and a few grapes or painted acorns to the moss.

TUSSIE MUSSIES

Tussie mussies are tiny bouquets made with fresh or dried flowers and herbs. Women in Elizabethan England treasured these nosegays not only because they were attractive, but because they served to mask the unpleasant odors associated with everyday life in a country without sanitation.

By Victorian times, many flowers and herbs had acquired symbolic meanings. Tussie mussies of that day were often made with particular plants as a way of conveying messages with flowers. For example, an ardent suitor determined to convince his lady-love of his good intentions might offer her a tussie mussie filled with lavender (devotion), artemisia (constancy), and yarrow (dreams of a loved one). "The Victorian Language of Flowers" chart on page 101 translates just a few words and phrases into "the language of flowers."

Methods for making tussie mussies vary, but you'll find that the two presented here are very similar. In the first project, dried and fresh herbs and flowers are wrapped together, one material at a time. The wrapped stems are then either inserted into a doily cuff or rewrapped with an attractive ribbon. The second and third projects are made by first composing the materials into bunches and then wrapping the bunches together. Additional materials are hot-glued into place once the bouquet has been shaped.

Using both fresh and dried materials in your tussie mussies allows you to combine the prettiest flowers of the season with the best selections from your local craft-supply store or florist.

Fragrant Tussie Mussie

WHAT YOU NEED

1 fresh rose, with a stem 6 inches long

3 stems of dried lavender, 6 to 12 inches long

3 sprigs of baby's-breath, 6 to 12 inches long

3 stems of fresh feverfew, 6 to 12 inches long

3 stems of fresh mint, 6 to 12 inches long

3 stems of fresh rosemary, 6 to 12 inches long

3 stems of fresh calendula blooms, 6 to 12 inches long

3 stems of dried statice, 6 to 12 inches long

3 sprigs of dried pearly everlasting, 6 to 12 inches long

5 fresh rose-geranium leaves

Green floral tape

Scissors

6-inch-diameter paper doily cuff

1 yard of yellow ribbon

12 inches of heavy-gauge floral wire

Pliers

Wire cutters

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

WHAT YOU DO

1 Strip the leaves from the fresh rose stem. Arrange the three lavender stems around the single rose. Using the scissors, cut a 12-inch length of the green floral tape and wrap it tightly once or twice around the four stems, about ½ inch under the head of the rose. Leave the remaining tape for the next step.

2 Arrange the three stems of baby's-breath around the rose and lavender stems. (As you add elements to the bouquet, be careful not to hide the rose.) Wind the remaining tape around the baby's-breath stems once or twice, spiraling the tape downward a bit. Add the fresh feverfew, stripping the leaves as necessary, and wind the tape around them, too. If you need more tape, cut another strip and start wrapping where you left off.

3 Alternately add the three fresh mint stems and the three fresh rosemary stems. These will add fragrance to the tussie mussie and will separate and balance the colors. Wrap the tape around the stems.

4 Add the three calendula blooms, spacing them evenly, and wrap the stems with the tape. Next add the statice and little bits of the pearly everlasting to round out the design. Strip the lower leaves from the stems so that you can compress the stems as you continue to wind the floral tape. The wrapped stems of the finished bouquet must fit through the hole in the paper doily cuff. Add the rose-geranium leaves, overlapping them to form a continuous border of greenery around the tussie mussie. Cut and use another length of the floral tape, if necessary.

5 Cut the wrapped stems to 4 inches in length. With a fresh piece of tape, wrap them again tightly, spiraling the tape from the top to the bottom and then up to the top again.

6 Insert the wrapped stems into the paper doily cuff. If needed, add more tape to secure the paper doily "teeth" to the stems.

7 Make a six-loop bow with the yellow ribbon (see "Bows" on page 46). Then wrap the heavy-gauge floral wire around the center of the bow, twisting the wire closed with the pliers. Using the wire cutters, trim the wire, leaving 1-inch lengths at both ends.

8 Place a little hot glue on each of the wire lengths and insert them between the cuff and greenery to secure the bow in place.

Ribbon-Wrapped Stem Tussie Mussie

If you'd rather not use a doily cuff on your tussie mussie, wrap the ribbon around the tape-covered stems instead. Start by tying a knot in the ribbon just below the greenery, leaving a 4-inch length at one end. Then spiral the long section of ribbon around the stems, flipping it over after every couple of turns to add an attractive series of folds. When you reach the bottom of the stems, wind the ribbon back up the stems in the same fashion. When you reach the top, tie the two ribbon ends in a knot and cut the ends at diagonals.

Dried-Rose Tussie Mussie

What You Need

8 sprigs of baby's-breath: two 10½ inches long, three 9 inches long, and three 8 inches long

11 stems of dried larkspur: two 10½ inches long, four 8½ inches long, and five 7½ inches long

2 freeze-dried roses, with the stems 1 inch long

1 freeze-dried rose, with the stem 2 inches long

11 stems of dried Mexican bush sage, six 9 inches long and five 7 inches long

7 dried rose leaves

3 dried ivy leaves

Green floral tape

Scissors

Plastic bouquet holder with pre-gathered lace collar (available at craft-supply stores)

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

18 inches of rose-colored ribbon, 1½ inches wide

2 yards of narrow green satin ribbon

2 yards of narrow cream satin ribbon

For a touch of the past with the delicate look of dried materials, try this fragrant tussie-mussie project.

What You Do

1 Combine the baby's-breath and the larkspur and arrange them in three bunches, placing all of the tallest flowers in one bunch. Using the scissors, cut a 12-inch length of floral tape and wrap the stems of each bunch. Then wrap all three bunches together, adding more tape if needed.

2 Insert the wrapped bunches through the center of the bouquet holder, leaving the stems sticking out the bottom.

3 Hot-glue the roses into the bouquet, placing the tallest rose next to the tallest larkspur.

4 Throughout the bouquet, hot-glue the Mexican bush sage around the roses.

5 Hot-glue the dried rose and ivy leaves throughout, taking care to vary the angles at which these materials are placed.

6 Wind the rose-colored ribbon around the base of the bouquet holder and down the stems, hot-gluing it in place as you spiral it downward. The ribbon should cover any visible floral tape on the stems beneath the holder. Use the scissors to trim the end of the ribbon and hot-glue the end to the stem.

7 Cut the narrow green ribbon into four equal lengths; repeat with the cream ribbon. Group the eight strands together, wrap them around the stems just below the base of the holder, and tie them in a single knot. Cut the ribbon ends to varying lengths.

Bold colors and large zinnia blossoms make this tussie mussie a definite eye-catcher.

Zinnia Tussie Mussie

What You Need

20 stems of dried oregano, 5 inches long

15 stems of dried tansy, 3 inches long

35 stems of dried pennyroyal, 5 inches long

3 medium-large dried hydrangea heads, broken into smaller pieces

6 dried zinnias: one 2½ inches in diameter, three 2 inches in diameter, and two 1½ inches in diameter

3 dried ivy leaves

Pruning shears

Scissors

Green floral tape

3 pieces of medium-gauge floral wire, 4 inches long

6-inch-diameter paper doily cuff

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Wire cutters

18 inches of wide red satin ribbon

3 yards of narrow red satin ribbon

What You Do

1 Arrange the oregano stems in five bunches, the tansy in five bunches, and the pennyroyal in five bunches.

2 Combine the oregano, tansy, and pennyroyal bunches to make three larger bunches, hot-gluing the hydrangea pieces to each one. Using the pruning shears, cut the stems of each bunch at an angle to reduce their thickness.

3 To strengthen the stems, use the floral tape to attach a 4-inch length of floral wire to the base of each bunch.

4 Tape two of the bunches together. Then tape the third bunch to the other two.

5 Slip the taped stems through the hole in the doily cuff. Add some hot glue to the inside face of the doily just around the edge of the hole, and press the doily gently against the base of the bouquet.

6 Using the wire cutters, cut the stems and the wires off at the desired length. Then use the wide ribbon to wrap the stems from the base of the doily all the way to the bottom, hot-gluing the ribbon as you wrap it in place.

7 Hot-glue the zinnias throughout the bouquet, placing the largest toward the center.

8 Hot-glue the ivy leaves throughout the bouquet, varying their angles to add visual interest.

9 Cut the narrow ribbon into two equal lengths. Place the lengths side by side and make an eight-loop bow with four streamers (see "Bows" on page 46). Cut the streamers to the desired lengths and hot-glue the bow between the doily and the bouquet.

TWIGS

Furniture and decorative items made from branches and twigs are called "rustic," and the best designers in this field are those who can visualize the finished piece while it's still part of a living tree. You can use many different types of wood for rustic craft projects; birch, dogwood, hemlock, silver maple, sycamore, and willow are particularly suitable. Avoid any kind of pine because the sap tends to run after the wood has been cut, making the wood sticky. Experiment with different woods to learn the properties of each type—some will be sturdy while others will be more flexible. But remember, don't cut trees that are endangered species.

Although you can cut wood all year long, the best time of year is winter or late fall when the sap is down. Unless your project calls for removing the bark, leave it on. If you find a tree or branch on the ground, examine it to see if it's rotten; if it crushes or breaks easily, leave it. When you find wood you like, cut it with a saw or pruning shears and trim off any parts you don't want. Cut the branches as long as possible since you can always cut them into smaller pieces later.

For most craft applications, you'll want to work with dry wood. Wood shrinks as it dries and may warp, so it's useful to see what form the dry wood takes before you use it. The rule of thumb is that wood air-dries at a rate of 1 inch in diameter a year. This means that even a small twig the thickness of a pencil will take a few months to dry completely. You can use fresh-cut wood if you nail it together and don't mind the bends and twists that will develop as the wood dries. When storing your wood, remember to store it in a cool, dry place. (For additional information on how to form twig bases, see "Making a Twig Base" on page 18.)

If you need an unusual backdrop for your favorite dried flowers, consider this simple twig trellis.

Twig Trellis

WHAT YOU NEED

- 12 green, straight twigs: six 13 inches long, four 4 inches long, two 12 inches long, and all ¾ inch in diameter
- 3 lengths of honeysuckle or other thin vine, 24 inches long
- Cornhusk scraps
- 4 sprigs of dried German statice dyed pink, 3 inches long
- 4 dried pink roses
- 1-inch-long common nails
- Hammer
- Clear acrylic varnish
- Paintbrush
- 4 yards of cotton ribbon, ½ inch wide
- Scissors
- Spool of thin-gauge floral wire
- Hat pin
- Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

WHAT YOU DO

1 Place the six 13-inch-long twigs vertically on your work surface. With the ends lined up and all the twigs touching side-to-side, sandwich them between two of the 4-inch-long twigs placed horizontally across and about 1½ inches from the bottom of the six 13-inch-long twigs. Starting in the middle of the top 4-inch-long twig, nail through that twig, into one of the 13-inch-long twigs, and through the 4-inch-long twig on the bottom. Repeat this process with each of the six 13-inch-long twigs. Then sandwich the six 13-inch-long twigs between two more 4-inch-long twigs, four inches up from the other set of horizontal twigs, and nail them together in the same way.

2 Sandwich the top end of the six 13-inch-long twigs between the two 12-inch-long twigs in the same manner as in Step 1. Starting on one side, bend a vertical twig so it curves gently out to one side, and nail through the "twig sandwich" as in Step 1. As you fasten each of the other five twigs, fan each out and gently bend the horizontal twigs into an arch.

3 Weave the three lengths of honeysuckle or other thin vine around and through the twig frame. Paint the entire trellis with the clear acrylic varnish and allow it to dry for one to two hours.

4 Make a multiple-loop bow with the cotton ribbon (see "Bows" on page 46). Using a piece of the thin-gauge floral wire, attach the bow to the front of the trellis between the two 4-inch-long twigs.

5 Shred the cornhusk scraps by running the hat pin all the way through them. Make two cornhusk "bouquets" by wrapping a piece of the thin-gauge floral wire around each of the two bundles of shredded husks, close to one end. Then trim the ends of the husks below the wire. Hot-glue the cornhusk bouquets to the bow, and hot-glue the German statice and the four roses to the center of the bow.

Fill the completed basket with an arrangement of dried flowers and foliage, or line it with a pretty piece of fabric and use it as a gift container.

Twig Basket

What You Need

8 dried twigs, 7½ inches long and ½ inch in diameter

12 dried twigs, 10 inches long and ¾ inch in diameter

1 flexible green twig, 24 inches long and ¾ inch wide

Tack hammer

Small finishing nails

Sharp knife

1 to 2 feet of any kind of vine

WHAT YOU DO

1 To make the base of the basket, place four of the 7½-inch-long twigs between two of the 10-inch-long twigs, spacing each one as shown in Figure 1. Then use the tack hammer to drive the finishing nails through the rounded sides of the longer twigs and into the ends of the shorter ones, as shown in the photograph below. Exact measurements are not critical in this project, but you will want to leave space for two additional 7½-inch-long twigs, one at each end of the base; these will be added in Step 3.

2 To assemble the sides, first study Figure 2. Note that the sides are constructed by stacking the 10-inch-long twigs log-cabin style and nailing them together, one by one. Space the twigs to create an interior that is about 7½ inches square. Stack the twigs to overlap each other by about ½ inch, nailing each twig to the one below it. After the basket sides are assembled, place one 7½-inch-long twig between each of the 10-inch-long twigs that form the top layer of the basket's sides. Nail the 7½-inch-long twigs to the 10-inch-long twigs underneath as shown in the photograph below.

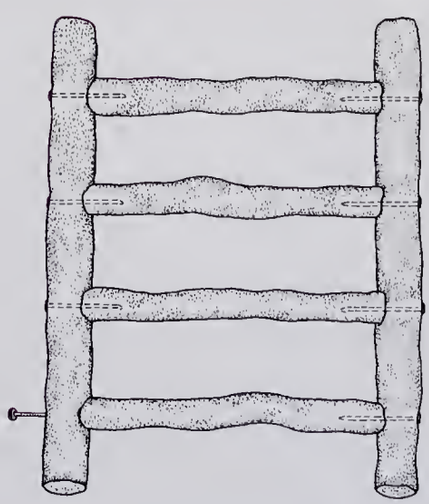


Figure 1

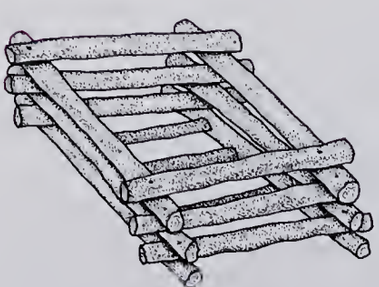


Figure 2

3 Turn the assembled sides upside down and place the base on top. Nail the base to the twigs underneath it and, for extra support, add the remaining two 7½-inch-long twigs at either end, nailing them in place, as shown in the photograph below.

4 Using a sharp knife, whittle each end of the 24-inch-long flexible green twig to flatten the inner surfaces so that it will rest evenly against the sides of the basket. Then bend and position the handle on the basket. Drive finishing nails through each end of the handle and into the twigs forming the sides of the basket. The handle may twist somewhat as it dries. Wrap strands of vine around the corners of the basket and where the handle is attached.

Rustic Picture Frame

Capture the spirit of the forest by creating this willow-twig frame for a favorite painting or photograph.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 10 to 15 straight willow twigs or other straight wood, 33 inches long and 1 inch in diameter
- 1 piece of ¾-inch plywood, 15½ × 33 inches
- Ruler
- Pencil
- 2 eye hooks and screws
- Screwdriver
- 10 inches of heavy-gauge wire
- 1 sheet of glass, 10¾ × 28½ inches and ¼ inch thick
- Jigsaw or handsaw
- Small rasp
- Box of 1-inch or 1⅝-inch brown panel nails
- Hammer
- Sharp knife
- Painting or photograph (see "Supply Sources" on page 254)
- Scissors
- Glass cleaner
- Soft cloth
- White craft glue

WHAT YOU DO

1 On the back of the piece of plywood, use the ruler to measure and draw a line 4 inches down from the 15½-inch-wide top. Then, along the penciled line, measure 3 inches in from each side of the plywood and make a point with the pencil. At these pencil points, screw eye hooks into the plywood and attach the 10-inch length of heavy-gauge wire to create a hanger for the frame. (You may need to use a screw and screwdriver to start the hole for the eye hook.)

2 Turn the plywood over. Place the piece of glass in the center of the plywood and trace around it with the pencil. Set the glass aside.

3 Measure a twig 8 inches long and cut it with the jigsaw or handsaw. Use the rasp to smooth it all over and round one end. Place the twig on the plywood with the rounded end positioned at the upper-left corner of the pencil tracing (see Figure 1). Using the nails with the length that will work best with the thickness of the twig, nail the twig to the plywood, leaving the end of the twig protruding off the board about an inch; this will be cut off later. Now cut three more 8-inch-long corner twigs, smooth them with the rasp, and repeat this positioning process at the other corners.

4 Trim a twig to measure 30 inches in length, smooth it with the rasp, and place it on one of the long pencil lines. Use the jigsaw or handsaw to cut one end to fit the angled position of the corner twig (see Figure 2). Nail this end against the corner twig to stabilize it. Now match the other end to fit the corner twig at the opposite end of the stick; cut it to fit flush with the angled corner twig. Nail this end in place. Continue this process with another 30-inch-long twig and two twigs cut to fit the shorter pencil lines across the width of the plywood.

5 Continue to measure and cut the twigs, smooth them, and fit them around the entire board, nailing them in place. You will want to alternate the thick end of one twig with the thinner end of the next twig (see Figure 3); this helps keep the twigs in straight rows and gives the frame a balanced appearance.

6 When you have covered the front of the plywood, the frame should look like Figure 4. Now, measure, cut, smooth, and nail in place four twigs to cover the edges of the plywood board.

7 Place the piece of glass back in the center of the frame, making sure it slips easily inside the middle space. If the space is too small, remove the glass and use a sharp knife to trim the inside row of twigs as needed.

8 To fit the painting or photograph to the frame, place the glass over it, trace around it lightly, then use the scissors to cut it to size. Clean and dry the glass thoroughly. Place the artwork in the middle space on the frame; use a very small dab of the craft glue on the back of each corner to hold it in place. Place the clean glass on top of the print, being careful to keep out pieces of bark or other dirt.

9 To secure the glass, measure and cut a twig to fit directly above the print, inside the frame, cutting the ends as neatly as possible. Place the twig inside the frame and nail it to the twigs on either side. Be very careful not to nail straight down or you will break the glass. You may want to lay a scrap piece of wood on top of the glass next to the area you are nailing (see Figure 5). Use the jigsaw or handsaw to cut all four twigs on the outer corners even with the edge of the frame.

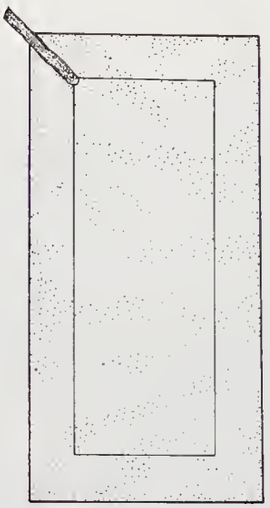


Figure 1

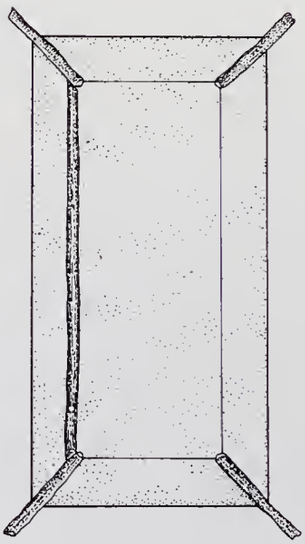


Figure 2

Figure 3

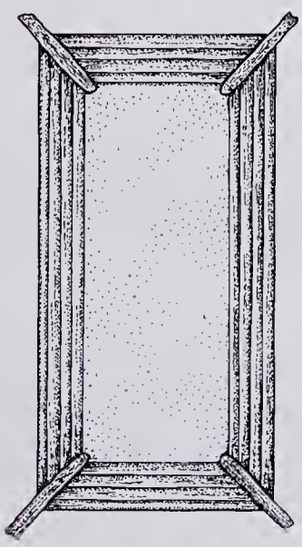


Figure 4

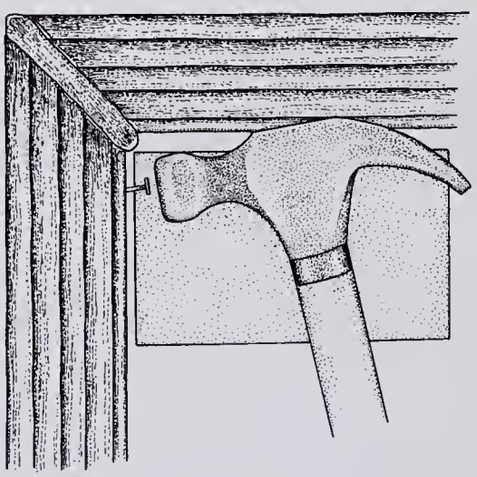


Figure 5

V VINEGARS

If you've ever stepped into a gourmet-kitchen store or specialty-food shop, you've surely been charmed by the stunning bottles of herbal vinegars lining the shelves. They make superb gifts or, when you feel like treating yourself, great additions to your own pantry shelves. They're not only appealing to the eye, but they excite the taste buds as well. These herbal delights add subtle flavors to almost any recipe that calls for vinegar—from fresh green salads to main courses.

Making these specialty vinegars is as much an art form as it is a culinary skill, but rest assured, it's also one of the easiest and most economical nature crafts you could hope to find. With little more than a few fresh herbs and some store-bought vinegar, you'll soon be developing delicious herbal recipes of your own.

There are four basic methods for making herbal vinegar. In the first and simplest method, a single fresh herb is steeped in a warmed white-vinegar base. The steeped vinegar is then decanted into a sterilized, often decorative bottle, and a sprig of the same herb is added as an embellishment. In the second method, one herb is steeped while a different type of herb is added to the bottle. In the third method, two herbs are combined during the steeping process and the same types of herbs are added to the bottle. In the fourth method—used to make the "Garlic and Chili-Pepper Vinegar" on page 230—the herbal ingredients are steeped inside the corked bottle and no decanting is necessary.

The "Best Herbs for Vinegars" chart on the opposite page offers some hints on suitable herbs and the best methods for making each type of vinegar. These recommendations aren't written in stone, however, so feel free to experiment with your favorite herbs.

Best Herbs for Vinegars

Part for Steeping	Part in Bottle	Recommended Uses
Method 1		
Dill	Dill	Good with any egg recipe.
Pineapple sage	Pineapple sage	Slightly sweet. Great for sprinkling on vegetable or fruit salads.
Rosemary	Rosemary	Good with potatoes.
Method 2		
Nasturtium	Tarragon	Best blend for salad dressing, with or without oil.
Nasturtium	Dill	Good for salad dressing.
Nasturtium	Rosemary	Pleasingly pungent over salads. Good marinade for beef.
Purple basil	Rosemary	Best blend over baked potatoes or home fries. Good marinade for beef.
Purple basil	Tarragon	A superb marinade.
Purple basil	Dill	Wonderful in egg salad, over pasta, with vegetables (including potatoes), and in dips.
Method 3		
Any basil	Any basil	Good with tomato dishes, beef, or liver. Also good on pasta and as a salad dressing.
Mint and anise hyssop	Mint and anise hyssop	Great with peas, greens, and meat.
Method 4		
Chili pepper and garlic	Chili pepper and garlic	Full-bodied but not overbearing. Good with nachos, pinto beans, and chili.

Basic Herbal Vinegar Recipe

What You Need
(for 8 to 10 bottles)

- 1 gallon of white vinegar
- 3 handfuls of fresh herb or herbs (see "Best Herbs for Vinegars" at left)
- 2 sprigs of additional fresh herbs for each bottle
- 16-ounce bottle of white-wine vinegar
- Large stainless steel or enamel pot
- Paper towels
- 1-gallon container with lid
- 8 to 10 sterilized bottles with corks
- Measuring spoon
- Funnel
- Sieve
- Paper coffee filter
- 1 block of paraffin, $1\frac{1}{2} \times 3 \times 3$ inches
- Hammer
- Double boiler or small saucepan in larger saucepan
- Ribbons, raffia, or other embellishments

Garlic and Chili-Pepper Vinegar

To make this delightful version of the basic vinegar recipe, you'll use 32 to 40 cloves of peeled, sliced garlic and 8 to 10 handfuls of tiny fresh chili peppers instead of the herbs. To start, divide the chili peppers and sliced garlic among the sterilized bottles. Add 3 tablespoons of white-wine vinegar to each bottle. Top the bottles with warmed white vinegar (see Step 1 of the "Basic Herbal Vinegar Recipe" on page 229), cork the bottles, and dip the corks into melted paraffin (see Steps 6 and 7 of the basic recipe). Label the bottles with the date. Store your vinegars in the refrigerator and let them steep for 3 weeks before using them.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Warm the white vinegar in the large pot over low heat; do not allow it to boil. On sunny days, heat the vinegar right in its transparent container by placing the container in the sun for a couple of hours.

2 Rinse three handfuls of the fresh herb or herbs in cool water. Pat dry with paper towels.

3 Place the herbs in the clean 1-gallon container and add the warmed vinegar. Cover the container to protect the vinegar from dust and place it in a dark, cool place. Let the herbs steep for four to six weeks.

4 After the herbs have steeped, place two rinsed, fresh herb sprigs into each sterilized glass bottle. (Rosemary, tarragon, and pineapple-sage blooms hold their shapes exceptionally well.)

5 For additional flavor, add 3 tablespoons of white-wine vinegar to each bottle. Then, using the funnel and the sieve lined with a coffee filter, top off each bottle with the steeped herb vinegar. Cork each bottle tightly.

6 Use a hammer to break up the block of paraffin and melt the pieces in a double boiler over low heat. If you don't have a double boiler, float a small saucepan in a larger saucepan containing water, and melt the paraffin in the small saucepan. Always heat paraffin gently because it can be highly flammable when overheated.

7 Dip the corked end of each bottle into the melted paraffin. Repeat two more times to ensure a good seal. When the wax has cooled, decorate the bottles with ribbons, raffia bows, or other embellishments. When storing your vinegar, protect it from light, which will cause the fresh herbs to decompose and which may encourage mold.

Herb Parts to Use When Making Vinegars

Herb	Part for Steeping	Part in Bottle
Anise hyssop	Foliage	Blooms
Basil	Foliage	Blooms (use woodier varieties, such as lemon basil and cinnamon basil, when possible)
Chili pepper	None	Whole pepper
Dill	All parts	Blooms
Garlic	None	Sliced cloves
Mint	All parts	Use anise hyssop blooms
Nasturtium	Blooms	None
Pineapple sage	All parts	Blooms
Rosemary	Sprigs	Sprigs
Tarragon	Leaves	Leaves

VINES

Nature crafters know that vines are one of Mother Nature's most wonderful creations. Beautiful and practical, vines come in a wide range of styles, sizes, and colors. Once you start thinking about vines, you're bound to start seeing them. Creeping up hedgerows, growing up your neighbor's shed, running along roadsides and fences, winding up tree trunks—vines grow everywhere in great abundance.

There are many varieties of vines available. Grapevine is the strongest, while honeysuckle and wisteria are nearly as sturdy but have a more delicate appearance. Catbrier, bittersweet, and kudzu are excellent materials for wreath bases (see "Wild Wreath" on page 235).

The appeal of vines has much to do with the wavy, graceful, and unpredictable way they grow. Those curves and tendrils enhance the appearance of wreaths. Many designers choose to leave some or much of a vine base unadorned so that the vine can shine in its own right (see "Window Swag" on page 201). Depending on the type of vine you use, your project can have a rustic or a very elegant look.

Of course, you can purchase vine bases in craft-supply stores, floral shops, and discount outlets, but making them yourself is rewarding and very simple to do.

Collecting Materials

Although you can gather vines all year 'round, the best times are fall and winter, when they are the most hardy. In spring and summer, plants grow rapidly and are full of water and new cells, which make the vines soft and more fragile. Look for firm, well-shaped lengths with lots of tendrils and no weak spots from insect damage. Be sure you know how to recognize poison ivy's hairy vine and stay away from it, even in the winter.

When you take your vines home, remove the leaves and cut the vines into single, long strands. It's easiest to work with freshly cut vine because it is less likely to split when you bend it. You can store vines for a long time as long as they stay dry and are kept out of the sun. If the vines get damp and begin to mold before you use them, soak them for ten minutes in water to which you've added a cup of chlorine bleach. If you have access only to dried, cut vines, soften them by soaking them in warm water until they become pliable; this may take as little as three hours or as long as three days.

The projects that follow use different types of vines in different ways. The "Harvest Arch" on page 232 makes the grapevine arch an important element of the swag; the "Wild Wreath" on page 235 entirely hides its kudzu base; and the "Root & Flower Wreath" on page 234 puts focus on the unique array of roots. Only the kudzu base was made from scratch; the others were purchased. But you can make them all! To learn how to make bases from vines, see "Making a Vine Wreath Base" on page 18.

To evoke the autumn season, use vibrant colors and richly textured materials in your Harvest Arch.

Harvest Arch

What You Need

30 cornhusks

2 cobs of dried red corn with husks

2 cobs of dried yellow corn with husks

9 × 33-inch grapevine arch (often called a cloud)

9 stalks of dried barley, 15 inches long

9 dried wheat straws, 15 inches long

9 stalks of dried oats, 15 inches long

6 acorns

3 buckeyes

1 pinecone

1 magnolia pod

6 okra pods

2 large green leaves, any kind

1 brown leaf, any kind

8 dried red chili peppers

7 stems of dried yellow or orange marigolds, 2 to 7 inches long

12 stems of dried purple sage, 4 inches long

3 curly pods

3 cedar-rose pods

Spool of medium-gauge floral wire

Wire cutters

Floral picks

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Electric drill with ⅛-inch drill bit

What You Do

1 Soak the cornhusks and the corn cobs in warm water for ten minutes or until the husks are soft and pliable. Remove the corn cobs from the water. Pull the husks back from the cob and arrange them to resemble flowers. Using the photograph as a guide, attach the four cobs to the arch with pieces of floral wire. Place all of the cob tips toward the center, with the red corn on either side and the yellow corn on the top and bottom.

2 Make three bundles of grain, each with three barley stalks, three wheat straws, and three oat stalks. Attach each bundle to a floral pick. Hot-glue the picked bundles to the top of the arch by inserting the glued picks between strands

of vine; place one bundle in the middle and one on either side. This will divide the arch into thirds. The grains should protrude about 6 inches above the arch form.

3 Make six bundles of the cornhusks, each with five husks. The husks can be shredded into smaller strips if needed. Attach each bundle to a floral pick. Hot-glue two bundles to the bottom of the arch and one behind each ear of corn to make the corn's husks look longer.

4 Drill holes through the acorns and the buckeye horizontally. You are making three clusters of nuts, two with three acorns each and one with three buckeyes. To make the clusters, place a drop of hot glue in each hole and string the nuts onto a piece of the medium-gauge floral wire, positioning the nuts in the middle of the wire. Fold the wire in half, and then twist both ends of the wire together so that the nuts are close to one another. Twist the wired nuts around the vine arch to hold the cluster in place. Then hot-glue the buckeye cluster onto the center of the arch near the two ears of red corn. Hot-glue one acorn cluster to the left of the yellow corn and the other about halfway toward the outside edge of the arch on the right side.

5 Wire or hot-glue the pinecone to the center of the arch. To wire the cone, wrap a 9-inch length of the medium-gauge floral wire around the bottom petals and twist the wire. Hot-glue the magnolia pod to the yellow corn on the left so that the pod appears to extend from the corn.

6 The focal point of the arch is the place where the buckeyes and the pinecone converge. Hot-glue an okra pod to this area and then hot-glue the green and the brown leaves around this area. Hot-glue the remaining okra pods to the husks to give them depth and texture.

7 Hot-glue the chili peppers to the bottom half of the arch, placing them so that they spread across the entire bottom of the design. Hot-glue the marigolds to the top of the arch. Arrange the purple sage on the top, right-hand side of the arch, using hot glue to secure the stems.

8 Use the curly pods and cedar-rose pods to bring the brown colors through the design. Wire or hot-glue both types of pods evenly around the arch to cover any bare spots or stems that are showing. Glue on any leftover flowers to round out the design and balance the color.

For additional cornhusk projects, *see "Cornhusks" on page 61.*

Root & Flower Wreath

WHAT YOU NEED

6 of last year's scented geranium roots or other interesting roots found during spring cleanup, in various sizes

12 × 15-inch oval grapevine base

2 pieces of sheet moss, 12 inches square

1 small handful of any kind of feathery lichen

60 miscellaneous dried flower heads, including hydrangea, strawflower, and globe amaranth

10 dried green leaves, any kind

1 interesting cone or pod

Pruning shears

Spool of medium-gauge floral wire

Wire cutters

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Scissors

WHAT YOU DO

1 Shake off any dirt still attached to the roots. (If the roots are heavily covered with dirt, you may want to rinse them in water.) Using the pruning shears, trim them until there is a little of the main stem and 5 to 6 inches of root remaining. Cover half of the grapevine base with the roots, attaching them with pieces of the medium-gauge floral wire, starting with the largest root at the top and the smallest on the sides. Overlap and intertwine the roots as you wire them to the base. To secure the roots, apply hot glue between the wires and the base. It will take two or three generous applications of hot glue to hold the bulkiest roots in place.

2 Using the scissors, cut the sheet moss into 20 pieces, each 2 inches square. Hot-glue the pieces to the base in a random pattern, placing most over the bottom half of the base and some pieces between the roots. Glue the lichen in the same manner, but place most of it on the inner rim for maximum effect.

3 Break the hydrangea into small blooms. Using hot glue, attach the hydrangea and remaining flower heads and leaves to the wreath in a pleasing arrangement, gluing most of the flowers onto the bottom half. Don't overdo it by covering too many of the root shapes. Hot-glue the cone or pod to the top section of the wreath, slightly off-center.

Gnarled roots and delicate flowers are paired in this unusual and dazzling wreath.

Wild Wreath

WHAT YOU NEED

8 to 10 lengths of kudzu, 6 feet long (If kudzu is not available, substitute wisteria or grapevine.)

Assorted grasses in various lengths, 6 to 15 inches long

6 rose hips, with stems 6 inches long

Several dried insects (optional)

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

WHAT YOU DO

1 Remove all of the leaves from the kudzu vine. Using one vine length, form a circle 14 inches in diameter, twisting the lead end around the rest of the vine to hold the circle shape. Wind the rest of the length of the vine around the circle. Add the other lengths of kudzu by twisting and intertwining them until the base is the thickness you want (see "Making a Vine Wreath Base" on page 18).

2 Lay all of the grasses in groups in front of you so you can choose from their various textures and colors. The kinds of grasses you will find will depend on where you live. Some common varieties include timothy, redtop, foxtail, rough bristle, feather, reed canary *(Phalaris arundinacea)*, switch, sudan, reed, and bottlebrush.

3 Start with the bulkiest grasses and hot-glue them evenly all around the wreath in one direction; put only a small dab of hot glue on the grass and be careful not to burn your fingers when you press the grass onto the base.

A swirl arrangement, like the wind blowing through a field, is perfectly suited to wild materials.

4 Fashion clusters with all the other grasses and the rose hips. Tuck and hot-glue the clusters around the wreath in the same direction as the first layer of the grass. You want to have grasses at different heights and on different visual planes so that the wreath has movement and fullness. Fill in wherever you see gaps by hot-gluing small tufts of the grasses to the base. To complete the wild effect, you can hot-glue dried insects to the wreath.

W WREATHS

Wreaths provide an attractive and customized way to bring nature's bounty indoors. Fresh and dried flowers and herbs, evergreens and foliage, cones and pods, seashells and driftwood, and many other natural materials can be attached to a wreath base in pleasing combinations and displayed with pride.

Wreathmaking techniques are easy to learn. As with most crafts, the more you practice them, the more accomplished you'll become. There are five main components to making a wreath: deciding upon the location of the finished wreath, choosing materials, selecting a base, determining attachment methods, and choosing design options.

The subject of bases, including the pros and cons of each type, how to make them, and how to attach materials to them, is covered in detail in "Bases" on page 15. The different methods of making hangers for a wreath and of attaching materials to a base are discussed and illustrated in "Hangers" on page 118 and "Floral Supplies" on page 115.

Choosing a Location

Your first wreathmaking decision is where to display your wreath. Is it going to be outdoors on a covered porch? Will it receive direct sunlight? Is it going to be in a bathroom with a shower? Weather, humidity, and sunlight all affect the longevity of natural materials. You probably won't want to use very expensive and fragile dried materials on a wreath that will hang on your front door. If the piece is going to be displayed indoors, will it hang someplace where it can be cleaned easily? If it's to hang over a fireplace mantel, how will you get it down to clean it? Location also plays an important role in determining the size of the wreath and the type of base: The scale of the wreath should be appropriate for the space. You'll also want to consider location when you choose the colors and textures of your materials. And certainly, where the wreath will be displayed will influence the style of the design—does "country" fit with your living room? Are those materials too contemporary for your friend's foyer?

Choosing Materials

If you are going to use the natural materials you have on hand—dried flowers from your garden or evergreen branches and cones you collected from a walk in the woods—start by placing them on a table. Then, consider the following: Do you have enough to amply cover a wreath base, or do you need other materials? What else do you need? More flowers? What colors should they be? What materials other than cones would make your evergreen wreath more distinctive? An exotic pod or a cluster of acorns sprayed gold? If you cover the base with dried oregano stems, which will look better as accents—sprigs of baby's-breath or pieces of dried pink cockscomb?

This same thought process needs to be going on in your head as you gaze in rapture at all the natural materials in your local craft-supply store or floral shop. As you browse, consider which material you want for the background or the material that will be dominant. Most wreaths have a background of something relatively low-key, inexpensive, or easy to obtain, such as artemisia, evergreens, sweet Annie, caspia, pinecones, or eucalyptus stems. Decorative materials, often more delicate and expensive, are generally added in fewer numbers. Consider what colors and textures work best together, what pleases your eye, and what matches your color scheme. Then go ahead and fall in love with those exquisite dried roses, unusual lotus pods, or heavenly tapestry ribbon; these are the items that can transform an ordinary wreath into pure magic! Sometimes the idea for a wreath will begin with a single material that you just have to have, and once you

have it, you plan the wreath around it—like decorating your living room around the look of a beautiful pillow!

For detailed information on the major categories of natural materials used to make wreaths and other nature crafts, see the sections on berries; cones, pods, and nuts; fruits and vegetables; herbs; evergreens; mosses, lichens, and fungi; twigs, and vines. Also, see "Bows" on page 46 for detailed information on bow making.

Choosing Design Options

Without realizing it, when you have chosen your materials and your base, you have already begun to design your wreath. All that remains is to decide on the way you want to arrange the materials on the base. This is not rocket science. There are a number of tried-and-true methods of arranging materials that result in very attractive wreaths. The four basic design options are spiral, cluster, spray, and full/multidirectional. You can combine elements of these options on one wreath; the cluster wreath shown in the photograph below, for example, is also a spiral.

Cluster Wreath

Cluster

Once your background materials are in place and the base is covered, you attach other materials in small groups. This is a good design for beginners. It's also ideal if you have a lot of background material, but not much of anything else. It's good, too, for showcasing a few rare or expensive materials. You are aiming for consistency and balance in the way you distribute the clusters.

Spiral Wreath

Spiral

This design is easy to create and makes a good choice for beginners. Successful results are achieved simply by orienting all the materials in one direction, either clockwise or counterclockwise. You can attach items singly or in clusters—just be sure to cover the stems of one cluster with the flowers or foliage of the next. Be generous with the amount of material you use. A spiral can be somewhat flat, such as the "Evergreen Wreath" on page 240, or very lush, as the wreath above illustrates.

Spray Wreath

Full/Multidirectional Wreath

Spray

This technique takes some practice because it can be challenging to get the balance just right between the spray and the rest of the wreath. A spray always has tapered edges, is widest and deepest in the middle, and then tapers out to narrow tips. A spray can be any shape. It works well with an attractive exposed base, as shown in the photograph *(above left)*.

One advantage of a spray is that is creates a strong and dramatic focal point. The "Wreath with Red Zinnia" on page 249 is a good example; note how the materials in that spray appear in the rest of the wreath and how the largest item—the zinnia—grabs your attention. All the issues discussed in "Focal Point" on the right pertain to making a spray.

Full/Multidirectional

This is the broadest wreath-design category. It includes designs like the "Cinnamon Lattice Wreath" on page 243 and the "Centerpiece Wreath" on page 244. This type of design often has a feeling of movement and can be very visually interesting. You can attach individual items or clusters. Often, the angles of individual elements are varied, as the example shown in the photograph *(above right)* demonstrates. You will need a good amount of a number of different types of materials. To make a successful design of this type takes the most ability. The arrangement of materials may look random, but it is quite intentional. Aim high and practice, practice.

Focal Point

One sure-fire design method is to fashion a large focal point and keep all your other materials in a secondary and complementary relationship to it (see "Fresh-Flower Wreath" on page 245). A wreath does not have to have a focal point, but if you want one, it needs to be a conscious decision. A focal point means that you are creating visual weight—which sometimes means literal weight—and it will affect how the wreath hangs. Generally, the focal point is where you place your largest materials in combination with some of the smaller items. A well-executed focal point uses counterbalance: If you use one large item for your focal point, balance it with a few smaller items on the opposite side of the wreath. A spray is a strong example of using a focal point.

Designer Tips

There are three planes in a wreath—the front surface, the inner edge or rim, and the outer edge or rim. Experiment with the distribution of your materials on these planes, and you can achieve very different designs.

If you enjoy the look of your base, leave it partially uncovered, as was done with the spray shown in the top left photograph on the opposite page.

To make the wreath three-dimensional, vary the height of your materials so that some of them angle out of the wreath toward you while others lie flat.

When choosing your colors, don't try to make all the materials "match." Aim, instead, for colors that work well together.

As you are adding materials, be sure to view your wreath from all sides; not everyone will be looking at the wreath straight-on.

When you are nearly done, examine your wreath up-close and from the side: You should not be able to see the mechanics or the base, unless a partially uncovered base is a deliberate decision. Use moss or other foliage to cover up the base or any uncovered stems. Pick off all the hot-glue strands.

To avoid a monotonous-looking wreath, combine flowers of different shapes, such as roses and larkspur. Make sure there's a third flower that bridges the difference visually, in terms of color, shape, and size, as shown in the full/multidirectional wreath in the photograph on the opposite page.

The ribbon or bow should be integral to the design, not just an afterthought.

Aim for balance in your wreath design. If the wreath has a long stem of flowers pointing up on one side, attach a long stem that drops away from the wreath on the opposite side.

To add visual interest, experiment with contrasting colors and textures, such as sponge mushrooms, pink pepperberries, and small red roses.

Don't rush to attach your materials. Take your time. Hold them in position and try to visualize how the finished wreath will look.

Use one type of material at a time, set it aside (to keep your work space and mind clear), then use the next, whether you're making a spiral or a full/multidirectional design. Don't jump from material to material.

If this is your first wreath, you may find you're afraid of the materials. Don't be. Many dried materials are fragile, but learning to handle them comfortably will make you a more skillful and creative wreath maker. If a piece of a flower breaks off, glue it back on!

Use all of the material—the buds, the blooms, and the leaves.

Use plenty of hot or cool-melt glue.

Varying shades of green and contrasting textures give this simple spiral wreath a timeless appeal.

Evergreen Wreath

What You Need

10-inch-diameter grapevine wreath base

12 stems of glycerin-preserved cedar, 12 inches long*

12 stems of glycerin-preserved juniper with berries, 12 inches long*

12 stems of glycerin-preserved heliconia or salal, 4 to 6 inches long*

16 glycerin-preserved magnolia leaves*

1 piece of sheet moss, 10 inches square

10 inches of medium-gauge floral wire or 1 green chenille stem, 12 inches long

Wire cutters

Pruning shears

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

*You can purchase glycerin-preserved materials from craft-supply stores and mail-order suppliers, or you can preserve the materials yourself (see "Preserving with Glycerin" on page 78 and "Preserving Leaves" on page 165).

WHAT YOU DO

1 Fashion a hanger for the wreath with the floral wire or the chenille stem (see "Hangers" on page 118). Using the pruning shears, cut all the evergreen branches into sprigs 4 to 6 inches long. You will need 40 to 50 sprigs each of the cedar and juniper.

2 Hot-glue small clusters of two to three cedar sprigs to the inner rim of the wreath base; insert the stem-ends between strands of vine at an angle in a clockwise direction. Use a generous amount of glue.

3 When the inner rim is evenly covered with cedar, hot-glue cedar clusters to the outer rim of the wreath base at the same angle.

4 Hot-glue cedar clusters to the front surface of the wreath base at the same angle. Be careful not to lay the clusters flat: pull the foliage forward slightly to give the wreath fullness.

5 Continue this same process with the juniper clusters and the heliconia or salal stems. Remember to evenly distribute these materials to the outside, inside, and front of the wreath.

6 Trim the stem-ends of the magnolia leaves to taper them slightly. Hot-glue the leaves in groups of various sizes with two or three leaves in each group.

7 Cut the sheet moss into small pieces, about 2 × 3 inches, and hot-glue them to the back of the wreath.

Be prepared for compliments when you display this intriguing and aromatic culinary wreath.

Cinnamon Lattice Wreath

What You Need

12-inch-diameter grapevine wreath base

10 cinnamon sticks, 10 inches long

1 dried artichoke

36 stems of dried Italian oregano, 3 inches long

50 stems of dried Greek oregano, 3 inches long

20 stems of dried sage, 4 inches long

19 dried red chili peppers

6 dried hat peppers

10 stems of dried mountain mint, 3½ inches long

2 dried bee-balm blooms

9 stems of dried anise hyssop

10 small garlic heads

10 inches of medium-gauge floral wire or 1 green chenille stem, 12 inches long

Pruning shears

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

Floral picks

What You Do

1 Fashion a hanger for the wreath with the floral wire or the chenille stem (see "Hangers" on page 118). On the back of the wreath base, slide a cinnamon stick through a vine strand on one side of the base and across the middle to the other side on a diagonal, weaving the stick through a vine strand on the opposite side. Add two cinnamon sticks on either side of this center stick, again on the diagonal, and weave each through the vine strands in the same way. Now insert the remaining cinnamon sticks behind the first layer of sticks, going in the opposite direction to form the lattice. Trim

with the pruning shears and save the portions of the sticks that protrude beyond the outside edges of the base. Hot-glue the ends of the sticks to the base.

2 Pull off six outer leaves from the artichoke and set them aside. Hot-glue the artichoke to the top left of the wreath base.

3 Cluster three to five stems of dried Italian oregano and attach them to floral picks. Repeat for the Greek oregano and the sage. Then hot-glue the picked clusters to the wreath base, alternating the Italian and Greek oregano and the sage. Be sure to fully cover the front surface and the inner and outer rims of the base.

4 Fill in the wreath by hot-gluing the peppers, mint, bee-balm blooms, anise-hyssop stems, trimmed cinnamon-stick pieces, artichoke leaves, and garlic heads onto the wreath base.

Centerpiece Wreath

WHAT YOU NEED

10-inch-diameter grapevine wreath base

20 sprigs of dried caspia, 1 inch long

3 dried blue hydrangea flower heads, broken into 9 pieces

9 sprigs of dried blue statice, 2 inches long

9 sprigs of dried white statice, 2 inches long

2 dried pink cockscomb flower heads, broken into 4 pieces

7 dried ivy leaves

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

3 yards of pink wired ribbon, 1 inch wide

WHAT YOU DO

1 Place the wreath base on a flat surface. Hot-glue three to four caspia sprigs together and insert the glued stems into the base. Repeat this process with the rest of the caspia, evenly distributing the clusters on the front surface and the inner and outer rims of the base, varying the angles of the clusters.

Wreaths aren't just for doors and walls—charm your dinner guests with this enchanting table wreath.

2 Hot-glue the hydrangea pieces onto the wreath base in groupings of one, two, and three. Make sure to hot-glue a few pieces onto the outer and inner rims to give the wreath depth.

3 Hot-glue the blue and white statice onto the wreath base, being sure to vary the angles of the stems and distribute them evenly all over the base.

4 Using the wired ribbon, make a six-loop bow (see "Bows" on page 46). Wire the bow to the wreath base, using the photograph on the opposite page as a guide. Make the streamers wavy by scrunching or bending the wire. Then hot-glue the ends of the ribbon to the base, with the tips hidden under flowers.

5 Hot-glue pieces of cockscomb to the wreath in groupings of one or two. Hot-glue the ivy leaves all around the wreath.

The loopy ribbon in this magical wreath ties together the fresh flowers, the gold wasp's nest, and the humble moss.

Fresh-Flower Wreath

What You Need

20-inch-diameter loosely woven grapevine base

4 fresh peach roses on 3-inch stems

2 fresh Casablanca lilies on 3-inch stems

2 stems of fresh Star-of-Bethlehem, 3 inches long

1 fresh daisy on a 3-inch stem

1 stem of fresh podded or berried eucalyptus, 8 inches long

10 fresh galax leaves

1 fresh wild mushroom

1 dried hydrangea flower head

1 lichen-covered twig, 3 inches long

3 sprigs of dried canella berries, sprayed gold, 3 inches long

1 wasp's nest, sprayed gold (optional)

1 large handful of Spanish moss

5 small pieces of dried deerfoot moss

10 inches of medium-gauge floral wire or 1 green chenille stem, 12 inches long

9 floral tubes

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

2 yards of gold-mesh ribbon, 2 inches wide

Spool of fine-gauge floral wire

Scissors

What You Do

1 Fashion a hanger for the wreath with the floral wire or the chenille stem (see "Hangers" on page 118). Place each of the fresh flowers in floral tubes and fill the tubes with water.

2 Using the photograph above as a placement guide, insert the tubed flowers into the wreath base by wedging them between the strands of grapevine. This process will determine the exact place-

ment of the flowers because you need to find strands along the base that provide each tube with a tight fit. Be sure to place one of the lily blooms at the lower center of the base, with the second lily to its right; this is the focal point of the wreath. Hot-glue the stem of podded or berried eucalyptus onto the base between the two lily blooms so that an equal length protrudes on either side of the center lily.

3 Hot-glue all the galax leaves onto the left-hand side of the wreath base. Hot-glue the mushroom onto the leaves so that it is opposite the daisy on the right-hand side of the base.

4 Wire on the gold ribbon, looping it over and around the fresh flowers. Make large loops and be sure they look balanced all around the wreath. Cut the ribbon, if necessary.

5 Break the hydrangea flower head into small 2- and 3-inch pieces and hot-glue them onto the inner and outer edges of the wreath base. Hot-glue the twig onto the outer edge of the base, below the second lily. Hot-glue the gold canella berries and the gold wasp nest, if desired, onto the base, as shown in the photograph on page 245. To fill in any large gaps in the design, hot-glue the Spanish moss onto the base. Lastly, hot-glue one piece of deerfoot moss on either side of the mushroom, two pieces below the Star-of-Bethlehem, and one piece below the center lily.

Hydrangea with Globe Thistle

WHAT YOU NEED

14-inch-diameter straw wreath base

80 sprigs of dried sweet Annie, 6 to 8 inches long

5 dried hydrangea flower heads

5 stems of dried cinnamon basil, 5 to 7 inches long

5 dried white yarrow flower heads

10 stems of dried mountain mint, 2 to 4 inches long

10 stems of dried bupleurum, 2 to 4 inches long

14 stems of dried globe thistle, 3 inches long

10 stems of dried blue larkspur, 2 to 4 inches long

10 dried bee-balm blooms

4 dried jimson pods

7 sprigs of glycerin-preserved cypress, 3 inches long*

10 inches of medium-gauge floral wire or 1 green chenille stem, 12 inches long

Floral pins

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

*You can purchase glycerin-preserved materials from craft-supply stores and mail-order suppliers, or you can preserve the materials yourself (see "Preserving with Glycerin" on page 78).

The varied colors, textures, sizes, and shapes of the dried naturals harmonize beautifully in this eye-catching arrangement.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Remove the green plastic wrapper from the straw wreath base. Fashion a hanger for the wreath with the floral wire or the chenille stem (see "Hangers" on page 118).

2 Make clusters of five to seven sprigs of sweet Annie and attach them to the wreath base with floral pins. Cover the stems of one cluster with the foliage of the next and angle the clusters all in one direction. Place most of the sweet Annie on the inside and outside edges of the wreath base.

3 Attach the hydrangea heads to the base with floral pins, evenly dispersing them around the front of the wreath.

4 Hot-glue the basil onto the wreath base, angling the stems in different directions. Fill in any gaps by hot-gluing yarrow, mountain mint, and bupleurum throughout the design.

5 Hot-glue the globe thistle stems to the wreath base, being sure to place some on the outside and inside rims and the front of the wreath. View your wreath from both sides to check how well you've distributed the globe thistle on all three planes. In the same manner, hot-glue the larkspur to the base.

6 To add a touch of bright color, hot-glue the bee-balm blooms in place. Hot-glue the tuliplike jimson pods around the wreath. Lastly, hot-glue the sprigs of cypress throughout to brighten the subtle hues of blue and pale green.

Woven Wreath

This wreath is magnificent and enormous, about 5 feet in diameter. Instead of attaching the materials to the base with wire, pins, or hot glue, the materials are woven into the base. You can make a smaller version using the same technique. Here's how:

Make a wreath base with honeysuckle vine wrapped around itself numerous times to form a circle of the desired width. Cover the base with dried artemisia on the front surface only. To do this, tuck a single stem (as long as possible) in between a strand or two of the honeysuckle vine; tuck and pull the artemisia until it is securely woven into the base. Repeat this process all over the base.

Repeat this same weaving technique with all the dried materials. Use one type of material at a time; tuck a single long stem into the wreath base at the same angle, pull on it until it's secure, and weave the stem into the base to hide it. Vary the lengths of the stems. This design results in a wreath that is predominately decorated on the outer edge, with some materials placed on the front surface.

ZINNIAS Z

These delightful, summer-flowering annuals are very popular with gardeners and floral designers for their hardiness, their range of jewel-like shades, and for the firm texture of their overlapping petals. Zinnias are available in both a large-flowering and a miniature variety. Fresh zinnias bring excitement and character to flower arrangements. Dried zinnias hold their color well and are less fragile than many other types of flowers. If you grow zinnias and plan to dry them, be sure to gather only the fully developed flowers since blooms picked too early will not retain a good form when they are dried. The desiccant method works well with zinnias (see "Drying with Desiccants" on page 76).

Wreath with Red Zinnia

What You Need

120 stems of dried sage, 5 inches long

120 sprigs of dried artemisia, 5 inches long

22 stems of dried lavender, 8 to 10 inches long

15 stems of dried bee balm with blooms, six 5 inches long and nine 2½ to 3 inches long

8 stems of dried blue larkspur, 6 to 8 inches long

8 stems of dried white larkspur, 6 to 8 inches long

23 stems of dried anise hyssop, eight 6 to 8 inches long and fifteen 2½ to 3 inches long

4 to 5 dried ferns, 10 inches long

4 to 5 stems of dried loosestrife, 8 to 9 inches long

1 dried red zinnia bloom

25 stems of dried love-in-a-mist, seven 5 inches long and eighteen 2½ to 3 inches long

44 stems of dried white globe amaranth, 2½ inches long

5 stems of dried white peonies, 3 inches long

12-inch-diameter crimped wire frame

Green floral tape

10 inches of medium-gauge floral wire or 1 green chenille stem, 12 inches long

Spool of fine-gauge floral wire

Wire cutters

Hot-glue gun and glue sticks

The radiating shape of the spray, with a single zinnia as its focal point, gives drama and grace to a dried flower wreath.

WHAT YOU DO

1 Wrap the wire frame with the green floral tape. Using the 10-inch length of medium-gauge floral wire or the green chenille stem, fashion a hanger for your wreath (see "Hangers" on page 118).

2 Using the fine-gauge floral wire, make 20 clusters of sage, each with six stems; then make 20 clusters of artemisia, each with six stems. Starting at the top of the wire frame, wrap a cluster of sage onto the base with the fine-gauge floral wire, angling it counterclockwise (see "Spiral" on page 237). Next to the sage cluster, wire on a cluster of artemisia. Attach all the clusters in the same way until you cover the entire base. Be sure to cover the stems of the preceding cluster with the foliage of the next cluster. Do not cut the wire until the entire base is covered; wrap the wire around the last cluster at least three times before cutting it with the wire cutters.

3 Now you are ready to create the spray. Mixing stems of different lengths, gather the stems of lavender into clusters, making two clusters of five stems and four clusters of three stems. Then wrap the lavender stems with pieces of the fine-gauge floral wire. Looking at the spray area as though it were the face of a clock, start at the two o'clock position and hot-glue one lavender cluster to the base pointing up and a second cluster to the base at four o'clock pointing down. Using these two clusters as your guideposts, hot-glue the other lavender clusters to the base in a radiating pattern. Angle some clusters toward you and some away from you. Repeat this procedure with the six stems of 5-inch-long bee balm, the eight stems each of the blue and white larkspur, the eight stems of 6- to 8-inch-long anise hyssop, and the four to five stems each of fern and loosestrife. Your aim is to create a lush, well-balanced, and three-dimensional star burst. Hot-glue the zinnia onto the spray exactly where you want the focal point of your wreath to be. Hot-glue the seven stems of 5-inch-long love-in-a-mist and the nine stems of globe amaranth to the spray so that they radiate out from the zinnia.

4 Use all the remaining short stems of flowers to decorate the rest of the wire frame. Start with the globe amaranth; tape the stems together in clusters of three and hot-glue them evenly all around the frame. Be sure to place them on the front of the frame and on both the inner and outer edges. Then hot-glue the fifteen 2½- to 3-inch-long stems of dried anise hyssop, the nine 2½- to 3-inch-long stems of bee balm, and the eighteen 2½- to 3-inch-long stems of dried love-in-a-mist to the frame. To give the wreath a feeling of roundness, place different varieties of flowers in slightly different positions. Last, hot-glue the five peonies onto the frame on different planes, varying the angles of the blooms.

For another project using zinnias, *see "Zinnia Tussie Mussie" on page 220.*

SPECIAL THANKS

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CONTRIBUTING DESIGNERS

Without the skill and generous support of the designers listed here, *The Complete Book of Nature Craft Techniques* might never have been written.

Barbara Applebaum (pages 99, 100, 106, 108, 145, 152, 169, 171, 232, 247, and 249) and **Lewis Applebaum** (page 133) own and operate Brush Creek Garden in Fairview, North Carolina. Barbara's flowers are organically grown in the couple's 1½-acre garden and painstakingly dried for use in her many floral projects. Lewis grows and cures gourds for crafting.

Vicki Baker (pages 191, 228, and 248) is a horticulturist and designer who specializes in dried herbs and flowers grown on her farm, Herbworks and Everlastings, in Marshall, North Carolina. She sells her plants, bottled herb vinegars, and custom floral work at farmer's markets and craft fairs.

Todd Barrow (page 226) lives in Asheville, North Carolina, where he operates Rustic Raven. A former graphic designer, he has been making rustic furniture for eight years.

Sandra Blaylock and **Gabriel Cyr** (pages 136 and 143) are award-winning gourd crafters who operate Many Voices Studio in Asheville, North Carolina. They are members of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. Their gourd work is collected throughout the United States and Europe.

Norma Coney (pages 13, 57, and 158) and her husband, Dennis, own and operate Tanglewood Gardens, an herb, perennial, and alpine nursery in Pennellville, New York. Norma works extensively with dried florals, teaches adult craft and gardening classes, and is the author of *The Complete Soapmaker* (Sterling/Lark, 1995).

Donna Sakamoto Crispin (page 35) lives in Eugene, Oregon, where she is a basket maker and basketry instructor. Her work is influenced by Native American and Japanese cultures, and she primarily uses natural materials.

Gwen Diehn (pages 192 and 193) teaches education and visual arts at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa, North Carolina. An avid crafter, she is the coauthor, with Terry Krautwurst, of four activity books for children; the most recent is *Kid Style Nature Crafts* (Sterling/Lark, 1995).

Marlis Elbers-Hupertz (pages 45 and 235) lives in Alexander, North Carolina, where she is a goldsmith by trade. She is a naturalist by passion and is also interested in weaving and spinning.

Lavell Evans (pages 141 and 142) lives in Bisbee, Arizona, where he creates unique art forms with gourds. His work reflects the Southwestern influences of Native Americans.

Greg and **Carla Filippelli** (pages 30 and 38) are owners of Cranberry Creek in Asheville, North Carolina. Their latest projects include large sculptural woven wallhangings for corporate spaces. Carla has also been designing and marketing baskets in galleries since 1980.

Cynthia Gillooly (pages 58, 128, and 245) is owner of The Golden Cricket, a floral-design studio in Asheville, North Carolina. Her innovative designs favor natural materials.

Marilyn Hastings (page 92) lives in Durham, North Carolina. A librarian, Marilyn explores gardening-for-fragrance and crafts as well as the Internet. Making rose beads is one of the experiments she has most enjoyed.

Wana Henry (pages 55, 60, and 199), **Phyllis Combs** (page 69), **Susan Elam** (page 69), **Aileen Lovelace** (page 200), and **Melanie Watson** (page 67) represent four generations of nature crafters. They market their nut, seed, pod, cone, and cornhusk creations through Shuckery and Woods Pretties, in Weber City, Virginia.

Judy Horn (pages 61, 64, 66, 222, and 223) sells her handmade cornhusk dolls, wreaths, and arrangements at the Corn Husk Shoppe in Weaverville, North Carolina, a business she owns with her husband, Dave.

Judy Mallow (pages 183 and 184) is a fifth-generation basket maker who also works in stained glass, macramé, and acrylics. A resident of Carthage, North Carolina, Judy teaches pine-needle and nut crafting and has won many awards for her work.

Josena Aiello McCaig (pages 96, 129, 209, 212, 237, 238, and 240) was formerly on the floral-display staff at Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina, where she learned to love working on a large scale. She now operates her own floral-design studio, Some Parlor Ivy, in Asheville.

Dolores Muller (pages 147 and 150), of Pinehurst, North Carolina, has been wheat weaving for 17 years and has won numerous awards for her work. She sells her wheat weaving in shops, through mail order, and at craft shows, under the business name of Carolina Wheat.

Alyce Pickelsimer Nadeau (pages 9, 103, 155, 157, 164, 188, 189, 194, and 215) lives in Deep Gap, North Carolina, and is the author of *Making & Selling Herbal Crafts* (Sterling/Lark, 1995). Past president of the North Carolina Herb Association, Alyce conducts herb classes, creates herbal weddings, and markets her handcrafted herbal creations at farmer's markets, juried craft shows, and through her business, Goldenrod Mountain Herbs.

Joan Naylor (pages 73, 87, 111, 114, 120, 121, 122, 202, 203, 219, 220, and 244) grows 40 raised beds of flowers and herbs for her shop, Rocky Creek Farm, in Barnardsville, North Carolina, where she makes and markets dried floral arrangements and wreaths for individuals and businesses.

Elizabeth Payne (pages 126, 157, 160, 162, and 201), owner and operator of Onion Knob Herbs, lives in a 200-year-old log home in Taylorsville, North Carolina. Elizabeth raises more than 175 different herbs and everlastings for her floral-design work and also teaches craft classes.

Bennie and **Mary Pierce** (page 39) are members of the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild. Mary primarily designs and weaves the baskets, and Bennie prepares the materials.

Marilyn Rehm (page 134) is a gourd crafter who lives in Big Prairie, Ohio.

Berniece Rice (pages 89 and 95), who lives in Swannanoa, North Carolina, is a self-taught nature crafter who has worked with florals for many years.

Cynthia Sharp (pages 5 and 11) lives in Hillsboro, Ohio, and has been making bark baskets for five years. Cynthia is also an artist, herbalist, and naturalist. Her baskets are sold internationally through her business, Creator's Beauty, located at Pondlike Herb Farm in Hillsboro.

Lyn Siler (page 32) is a well-known basket maker and teacher, whose shop, the Weavery, is located in Waynesville, North Carolina. Lyn is the author of *The Basket Book* and *Handmade Baskets* (Sterling/Lark, 1988 and 1991, respectively).

Brit Small-Oie (pages 175, 179, 180, 181, and 191), Norwegian papermaker and fiber artist, lives in Marshall, North Carolina, and is a student of fine arts at The University of North Carolina in Asheville. Brit created commission work while living in Norway and plans to continue her work as an artist in North Carolina.

Gladys Smith (page 137) is a partner in Green Valley Wood Crafts in Leicester, North Carolina, where she does tole painting on a variety of projects, from rustic wood to gourds.

Ginger Summit (page 140) is the owner of Summit Designs in Los Altos, California. Coauthor of the upcoming *The Complete Book of Gourd Craft* (Lark, 1996), Ginger finds great pleasure in working with gourds and using them in her home.

Terry Taylor (pages 166, 167, 197, and 198) creates art from the garden using the pique-assiette, or shard art, technique. He also combines pique-assiette with tramp art-carving to make decorative objects for interior spaces and works with many natural materials as well. Terry collects, creates, and carves from his home in Asheville, North Carolina.

Diane Weaver (pages 44, 91, 172, 204, 214, 234, and 243) and her husband, Dick, operate Gourmet Gardens herb nursery in Weaverville, North Carolina. Diane uses some of their 180 herb varieties to design and make wreaths, arrangements, culinary herb mixtures, and herb butters.

Jeffrey Webb (page 205) of Asheville, North Carolina, is an instructor in the horticultural department of Haywood Community College in Clyde, North Carolina. One of his students, Sherryl Franklin, was kind enough to recreate Jeff's terrarium design for this book.

Mary Wojeck (pages 135 and 139) of Traveler's Rest, South Carolina, is the author of *Crafts from the Gourd Patch* (self-published, 1993).

SUPPLY SOURCES

Baskets

Allen's Basket Works
8624 SE 13th Street
Portland, OR 97202
(503) 238-6384
Oak, maple, black walnut, and cherry

The Country Seat
R.D. 2, Box 24A
Kempton, PA 19529
(610) 756-6124
Large variety of basket-weaving supplies

Earth Guild
33 Haywood Street
Asheville, NC 28801
(704) 255-7818
Books, tools, reed, cane, and dyes

Frank's Cane and Rush Supply
7252 Heil Avenue
Huntington Beach, CA 92647
(714) 847-0707
Oak and ash, instruction books, kits, tools and implements, and all manner of natural weaving supplies

Flowers and Herbs

Mountain Farms, Inc.
307 Number 9 Road
Fairview, NC 28730
(704) 628-4709
Many varieties of dried flowers and herbs, cones, nuts, and pods

Rasland Farm
N.C. 82 at U.S. 13
Godwin, NC 28344
(910) 567-2705
Many varieties of dried flowers and herbs, scented geraniums, potpourri supplies, teas, and bath products

Sandy Mush Herb Nursery
316 Surrett Cove Road
Leicester, NC 28748
(704) 683-2014
Many varieties of fresh plants, particularly herbs and scented plants, books, cards, seeds, and gift items

Mosses and Lichens

Hoh Grown
P.O. Box 2135
Forks, WA 98331-2135
(206) 374-5838
Many varieties of mosses, lichens, cones, and pods

Pine Needles

Judy Mallow
2463 Farm Life School Road
Carthage, NC 28327
(910) 949-2234
Southern longleaf pine needles, sliced walnuts, thread, books, and crafts

Wheat

Campus Granary
Bethel College Women's Association
North Newton, KS 67117
(316) 283-3940
Wheat (karl, turkey red, centrux, and club head) and oats

Stillmeadow Farms
2120 Fox Street
Long Lake, MN 55356
(612) 473-2861
Wheat, barley, oats, and other dried materials

Black Beards Ltd.
Box 477-512 Washington Drive
Turtle Lake, ND 58575
(701) 448-9171
Dried black wheat, regular wheat (golden), oats, flax, speltz, and books

Fish Print

Larkspur Graphics
Alta House
P.O. Box 147
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